

Oral glucose tolerance test for growth hormone



Information for patients

This leaflet answers some of the questions you may have about having an oral glucose tolerance test for growth hormone. It explains the purpose of the test and what you can expect when you come to hospital. If you have any other questions or concerns, please speak to the doctors or nurses caring for you.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name** and **date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.

Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

What is an oral glucose tolerance test for growth hormone?

In this test a glucose drink is used to attempt to alter the level of growth hormone that is measurable in your blood. A normal response results in growth hormone being suppressed in reaction to a dose of oral glucose.

Why do I need this test?

Growth hormone is produced by the pituitary gland and is needed in childhood to regulate metabolism and promote growth. Growth hormone is produced in adulthood to maintain bone and muscle mass. It also affects body fat levels, energy levels, memory and general wellbeing. An excess of growth hormone is known as acromegaly.

This test is routinely used to diagnose or rule out acromegaly. It is also used to assess for remission of acromegaly after treatment has been completed.

What are the benefits?

This test demonstrates if we are able to successfully suppress growth hormone levels in the blood. If you have been having symptoms that could be due to an excess of growth hormone (acromegaly) this test can be used to diagnose or rule out acromegaly. If you have been diagnosed with acromegaly and have had treatment, this test can be used to find out if treatment was successful.

What are the risks?

A cannula (tiny plastic tube) will be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand using a needle. The cannulation process is similar to that of a blood test. Associated risks with cannulation or a blood test may include:



- multiple punctures to locate veins
- bleeding from puncture site
- bruising
- haematoma (blood build up under the skin)
- fainting or feeling lightheaded
- infection (a slight risk any time the skin is broken)
- phlebitis (inflammation of the vein)

Keeping pressure on the puncture site for a few minutes after the needle is removed will help to reduce bruising.

At the start of the test we will ask you to drink a sugary drink. This can cause some people to feel nauseous (feeling sick). During the test you may experience hyperglycaemia (high blood sugar) or hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar).

Are there any alternatives?

There are no alternatives to this test.

Do I need to prepare for my test?

Before the test, you should have nothing to eat or drink from midnight, except plain water.

You may take your regular medication unless specifically instructed otherwise. If you take medication to treat diabetes please speak to your endocrine doctor or call PIU prior to your test.

If you have been taking somatostatin analogues, such as octreotide or lanreotide, these would normally be discontinued by your endocrine doctor three months before the test.

If you have been taking pegvisomant this would normally be discontinued by your endocrine doctor four weeks before the test.

What happens before my test?

Your blood pressure will be taken and the nurse will ask you about your regular medications.

What happens during my test?

A cannula (tiny plastic tube) will be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand using a needle from which blood samples will be taken for the duration of the test.

A growth hormone level will be taken when the cannula is inserted. You will then be asked to drink a glucose drink. A blood sample will then be taken from the cannula every 30 minutes for two hours. This is five blood samples in total.

You are allowed to drink water for the duration of the test but no other food or drink is allowed.

How long does the test take?

The test lasts for two hours from the time you have had the glucose drink. You should expect to be in the unit for two and a half to three hours.

What happens after my test?

Once the test has been completed the cannula will be removed and you will be able to go home.

Results will be reviewed by the endocrine team. They will either be sent to you by letter and, in some cases, discussed on the phone or with you at your next clinic appointment. We will also send a letter to your GP. This may take up to six weeks.



Contact

If you have any queries or concerns please contact the Programmed Investigation Unit (PIU).

Tel: 020 3299 3034 or 020 3299 1385. Opening hours: 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

Sharing your information

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.



PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

Email: **kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net**

You can also contact us by using our online form at

www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.