

# Plasma metanephrines

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## Information for patients

This leaflet answers some of the questions you may have about having a plasma metanephrines blood test. 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 a plasma metanephrines test?

This is a blood test that is primarily used when a doctor either suspects a person has a phaeochromocytoma (a very rare adrenal gland tumour) or wants to rule out this possibility. It is done to further investigate symptoms including persistent high blood pressure, headaches, sweating, flushing episodes or a rapid heart rate. It is also used as part of investigations for an incidental finding of an adrenal growth. It is also used as a screening test in those with a family history of phaeochromocytoma or for monitoring those who have been previously treated for a phaeochromocytoma.

## Why do I need this test?

You may need this test for various reasons, as detailed above. You may be having this test to investigate symptoms you are having or because there has been an incidental finding of an adrenal growth on a scan. You may be having the test as a screening test due to a close relative having a phaeochromocytoma or as a surveillance test after treatment for a phaeochromocytoma.

## What are the benefits?

This test helps to confirm a diagnosis of a phaeochromocytoma or rule it out. It is also used to monitor patients who have been diagnosed with a phaeochromocytoma after they have received treatment.

## 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.

### **Are there any alternatives?**

There are no alternatives to this test.

### **Do I need to prepare for my test?**

Please avoid caffeinated drinks and nicotine on the day of your test. You may eat and drink normally, unless specifically instructed otherwise. You can continue to take your regular prescribed medications.

### **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.

You will then be asked to lie down and rest for one hour.

After the hour has passed the plasma metanephrines blood sample will be taken from the cannula.

## How long does the test take?

The test lasts for one hour. You should expect to be in the unit for one and a half hours.

## What happens after my test?

Once the test has been completed the cannula will be taken out 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 or, 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 Hambleden 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](mailto:kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net)**

You can also contact us by using our online form at

**[www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals](http://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.**



