

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham



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NHS Foundation Trust



ACTH Curve Test

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Your doctor has recommended that you have ACTH curve test. It is a test to establish the correct dose and distribution of hydrocortisone replacement therapy throughout the day.

ACTH (adrenocorticotrophic hormone) is a hormone produced by the pituitary gland to stimulate the adrenal gland to produce cortisol. Cortisol is one of the essential steroid hormones that keeps you healthy. You can be unwell if this hormone is too high or too low.

Preparation for your test

- You can eat and drink as normal. You do not need to fast prior to the test.
- DO NOT take the first dose of your hydrocortisone on waking.
- Bring your hydrocortisone medications with you when you come for the your test.
- If you are taking oestrogen containing medications (e.g. contraceptive pill or HRT), you will need to stop these medications for at least 6 weeks prior to the test. If you are taking the oestrogen pill for contraception, it is important that you consider alternative forms of contraception. Please contact the endocrine team to discuss this further.
- Please arrive at least 5 minutes before your specified appointment time.
- The test will last for at least 4 hours.
- You will be able to drive home after the test.
- Children are not advised to attend the appointment However, if this poses a particular problem for you, please discuss this with us.

What will happen during your test?

You will be introduced to the person performing the test. An explanation will be given as to what to expect.

A nurse will place a cannula, which is a small tube used to take blood samples, into a vein in your arm. The initial blood sample will be taken to check the baseline level of ACTH in your body. You will then be

given your usual morning dose of hydrocortisone immediately after first blood sample is taken.

Further blood samples will then be taken from the cannula every hour for 2–4 hours to measure your ACTH levels. Once the test is completed, the nurse will remove the cannula.

What will happen after the test

You will be able to take your usual medication as immediately after test. The result of your test will be reviewed by the endocrinology doctor.

Your doctor will be informed of the result of your test. There is no need for you to contact the department for your test result as you will be contacted directly if necessary.

If necessary, you will be called back into the clinic to discuss the result, especially if you need to start on any treatment. Sometimes, it is also necessary for us to contact you by telephone, so please provide us with your home and mobile telephone numbers when you come in for your test.

Please remember the timing of your endocrine test is important so please report directly to the unit at the time specified in your appointment letter. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please contact the department and we will try to rearrange it for you.

Contact Details

Where to report for the test:

Endocrine Day Case Unit

Area 1A, Outpatient Department

Ground Floor, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham

Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2GW

If you have any queries please contact;

Endocrine Clinical Nurse Specialist Team

Email: EndocrineNurses@uhb.nhs.uk Tel: 0121 371 6950

If your call is not answered please leave a voicemail message stating your name, hospital number, contact number and your query. A member of the nurse team will return your call.



The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm or call 0121 371 4323.

ENDOCRINE

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