



**University Hospitals Birmingham**  
NHS Foundation Trust



# Saline Suppression Test

– information for patients

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[www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm)

Your doctor has recommended that you undergo a saline suppression test to check how your body's production of the hormone aldosterone will respond when you are given a saline infusion (a drip containing a water and salt solution). Aldosterone is produced by the adrenal glands which sit above the kidneys. Aldosterone is a steroid hormone that regulates your blood pressure.

This test is a second line test for the confirmation of a condition called 'primary aldosteronism' (excessive production of the hormone aldosterone). You would have been screened previously for renin/aldosterone through a blood test which showed an increased aldosterone level. This screening would have been done following pausing/stopping some of your blood pressure medications. You are required to have normal potassium levels before the test.

## Preparation for your test

- You will be advised to temporarily stop some blood pressure medications at least 4 weeks before your test. You may be given an alternative blood pressure medication, if needed to control your blood pressure by your GP
- Your potassium level will be checked at least once a week prior to the test. You might be given medication to raise your potassium level if needed by your GP
- You should refrain from eating liquorice for at least one week before the test
- You will be able to eat and drink, as normal, during the test
- The test will last for at least 6 hours
- Please come to Endocrine Day Case Unit at 08:30am on the morning of your test
- Children are advised not to attend. However, if this poses a particular problem for you please discuss this with us

## What will happen during your test?

- You will be asked to attend the Endocrine Day Case Unit for 5 hours
- A nurse will explain the test to you
- You will need to lie down on a bed for the duration of your test
- A nurse will place a cannula, which is a small tube to be used to take blood samples, into a vein in your arm
- A blood sample will be taken initially to measure your renin, aldosterone, urea, electrolytes and cortisol at the beginning of the test
- The nurse will then give you normal saline (salt solution) drip through the cannula into your vein for 4 hours
- Your blood pressure will be monitored regularly during the test
- After the drip is completed, the nurse will take another blood sample for renin, aldosterone, urea, electrolytes and cortisol. Once the test is completed, the nurse will remove the cannula
- The nurse will check your blood pressure and check that you are alright before being sent home

## Are there any risks with this test?

This test is not suitable for patients with severe heart failure, severe uncontrolled high blood pressure, kidney problems, heart conditions, or who have very low potassium levels. You need to inform your doctor or nurse if you are suffering from any of these conditions.

## What will happen after your test?

- You will be able to take your usual medication immediately after the test
- The result of your test will be reviewed by the endocrinology doctor
- You do not have to contact the department for your test result as you will be contacted directly if necessary
- Your doctor will also be informed of the result of your test

- 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 08:30am. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please contact the department and we will try to rearrange it for you.

### Please report to the following location for your test:

Endocrine Day Case Unit  
Area 1A, Outpatient Department, Ground Floor  
Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham  
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston,  
Birmingham B15 2GW

## Contact Details

If you have any queries please contact the Endocrine Nursing Team:

**Email: [EndocrineNurses@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto: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](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm) or call 0121 371 4323.

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