# Arginine stimulation test

Your doctor has recommended that you have an arginine stimulation test to check if your body is producing enough growth hormone. Growth hormone is produced by the pituitary gland which is a small pea-sized gland underneath the brain. Growth hormone is responsible for controlling growth and metabolism in childhood. In adults, growth hormone is important for maintaining muscle and bone mass and affects the levels of body fats. Growth hormone also controls energy levels, memory and your general feeling of well-being.

## Preparation for the test

- You need to fast from midnight the night before your test, you can drink water
- You can take all your regular medications on the day of the test with water only
- Please bring a list of your medications with you
- You will be able to drive home after the test
- The test will last for at least 4 hours
- Please come to Endocrine Day Case Unit at 08:30am on the morning of your test
- Children are not advised to attend. However, if this poses a particular problem for you please discuss this with us

## What will happen during the test?

- A doctor or 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 used to take blood samples, into a vein in both your arms
- Blood samples will be taken to measure your growth hormone and sugar levels
- The nurse will then give you an infusion of arginine through the cannula into your vein. The infusion will take 30 minutes. This should stimulate growth hormone production
- The nurse will take blood samples to measure your growth hormone levels every half an hour for up to three hours.
- Once the test is completed, the nurse will remove the cannula and you will be given something to eat and drink
- You will need to stay on the Endocrine Unit for one hour after the test for the nurses to monitor you. You will then be able to go home

## Are there any risks with this test?

- You may experience headaches, low blood pressure or/and mild sickness when the medication (arginine) is given, but this is rare. These symptoms do not last for long
- Some patients may also experience a tingling sensation in their lips and a metallic taste. These symptoms will only last for a brief period of time

## What will happen after the test?

- You will be able to take your medication as usual immediately after the test
- The result of your test will be reviewed by the endocrinology doctor and this can take up to 4 weeks
- 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 before 08:30am. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please contact the department and we will try to rearrange it for you.**

## Contact details

**Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham**

**Email (preferred method):** EndocrineSecretaries@uhb.nhs.uk
**Phone:** 0121 371 6950
(we will aim to return telephone call within 3–5 working days)

**Birmingham Heartlands, Solihull and Good Hope Hospitals**

**Email (preferred method):** EndocrineNursesHGS@uhb.nhs.uk
**Phone:** 0121 424 2487
(we will aim to return telephone call within 3–5 working days)

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