



Breath test for lactose intolerance

1. What is the test for?

This test is to find out whether your intestine can digest lactose. Lactose is a sugar found in dairy products and other processed foods. If you are lactose intolerant, it means your body has difficulty in handling lactose and you may experience symptoms like diarrhoea, stomach pains and bloating.

Some people are unable to digest lactose because they do not produce enough of an enzyme (a substance which helps break down food) called lactase.

2. What are the benefits of me having the procedure?

Your doctor has referred you for a lactose tolerance breath test, as you may be showing symptoms of lactose intolerance.

The results of this test will help us to diagnose or rule out lactose intolerance.

3. How is the test carried out?

This test involves taking a sample of your breath, followed by a lactose drink and then further breath samples at 30-minute intervals. This enables the clinical team to check for lactose intolerance. The test should take about 2.5 hours to complete.

A fully trained Associate Practitioner or Biomedical Scientist will carry out the test.

4. What side-effects/complications are associated with this test?

This test is very safe and side effects, other than minor ones, are extremely rare. However, if you feel unwell, please let one of the laboratory staff know immediately.

5. Preparation for the test

- Please ensure that you have not been on antibiotics for **at least 4 weeks** prior to the test. If you have, please notify the Point of Care Testing Team - see contact details below.
- **Do not** eat or drink anything from 9.00p.m. the night before the test (except plain water) and up until the test is completed.
- We recommend stopping the use of probiotics, promotility drugs and laxatives, fibre supplements or stool softeners like milk of magnesia, ex-lax and Imodium at **least one week** prior to breath testing.
- We suggest that fermentable food and drinks such as complex carbohydrates (e.g. beans, oatmeal, whole wheat bread, quinoa, potatoes, barley, brown rice, whole-grain bread, and pasta), dairy products, sugary drinks like fruit juices or squash, fizzy or soft drinks, alcohol, vitamins, chewing or bubble gums should be avoided **24 hours** prior to breath testing.
- Smoking is **not** permitted on the morning of the test or during the test.
- You may brush your teeth and have a glass of warm water on the morning of the test.

Information for Patients

Contacts:

For any clinical queries, please contact Dr Jessie Raju on **0121 424 7254** or **0121 424 0184** or **0121 371 5978**.

To change your appointment date/time at **Good Hope Hospital**, please call the Point of Care Testing Team on **07814775304**

To change your appointment date/time at **Queen Elizabeth Hospital**, please call the Point of Care Testing Team on **0121 371 5976**

POCT Team

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham

Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston

Birmingham B15 2GW

Telephone: 0121 3715976 or 0121 371 5978

Good Hope Hospital

Rectory Road

Sutton Coldfield

B75 7RR

Telephone: 0121 424 9320 or 0121 424 9247

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version, please ask a member of staff or email interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk.