

Insulin Tolerance Test

Your doctor has recommended that you have a test called Insulin Tolerance Test.

The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with information about the test so that you understand why it is being done and what you need to do to perform the test correctly.

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Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać
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Why do I need to have this test?

The insulin tolerance test is designed to measure the function of the pituitary gland under stress. After lowering your blood glucose levels, we will measure your stress hormone (cortisol) and growth hormone. This will tell us if your pituitary gland is working normally or if you require tablet treatment.

What does the test involve?

You will have a cannula (small tube) inserted into a vein in your arm. Following baseline blood samples, an injection of insulin will be given through the cannula by a specialist nurse or doctor. This will lower your blood glucose level, inducing what is medically termed hypoglycaemia. This counts as the stress as people usually feel very hungry, faint and sweaty. These symptoms are generally not severe and last for about 10-15 minutes.

Once hypoglycaemia has been achieved, the test will be reversed by giving you food and drink or by giving a glucose injection through the cannula, depending on how you feel at the time. Blood sampling continues for two hours after the initial injection at 30, 45, 60, 90, 120 minutes.

Are there any risk involved ?

This test should not be performed on anyone who has epilepsy or heart problems. If you have or have had any of these it is important that you kindly let us know before the test date. To be sure that this test is safe for we may arrange a routine ECG tracing of your heart.

Is there anything I should do at home?

Please come fasting, i.e. nothing to eat or drink from midnight except plain water.

Please do not take any medications with the exception for desmopressin (if you are on this). Please bring all your medications with you. If you normally take hydrocortisone tablets, please omit the lunchtime and teatime doses the day before and on the morning of the test. If you take any medication for diabetes, kindly let us know so that we can make arrangements for you. If you smoke, please refrain from smoking on the day of the test.

How will I find out the results?

Some of the blood tests may take from a few days to a few weeks to be reported. Some of the tests might be sent to another hospital for analysis. So please be patient during this time.

An outpatients appointment will be made for you so that we can discuss the results. Your Endocrinologist will write to your GP with the results of the test. A copy of this letter will usually be sent to you also.

What if I need advice?

We have a secure confidential answer machine available and email service for patients requiring advice from the Endocrinology Specialist Nurse.

Messages will be assessed and returned in priority order.

The Endocrinology Specialist Nurse may be unavailable at times, so please leave a short message including:

- your full name
- hospital number or date of birth
- contact number

They will contact you as soon as possible, though please be aware this may be the next working day.

If your enquiry is a medical emergency, please contact your own GP, NHS 111, dial 999 or attend your local Accident and Emergency department.

Further information?

You can contact the Endocrinology Specialist Nurse with any questions you may have.

If your enquiry is for the Endocrinology Medical Team, please contact their secretaries through the hospital switchboard.

Endocrinology Specialist Nurse

Tel: 07881 928197

Email: endocrinology.nurse@sthk.nhs.uk