

Endocrinology

Arginine stimulation test

Your doctor has recommended that you have an arginine stimulation test to assess if your body is producing enough growth hormone.

Growth hormone is one of the hormones produced by the pituitary gland. Growth hormone is responsible for controlling growth and metabolism in childhood. It is also produced in adulthood and has a role in maintaining muscle and bone mass, and body fat composition. It can also have effects on energy levels, memory and general feeling of well-being.

Preparation for the test

- You must **not eat or drink anything except water from midnight** the night before your test.
- You can take your other regular medications. Please bring all of your medications with you when you attend for your test.
- The test will last for approximately 4 hours. You will be able to drive home afterwards.

What will happen during the test?

- You will be introduced to the doctor or nurse performing the test, who will provide an explanation as to what to expect during the test and obtain your informed consent.
- You will need to lie down on a bed for the duration of your test.
- A cannula, which is a small tube used to take blood samples, will be inserted into a vein in your arm, and an initial blood sample will be taken to measure the baseline level of growth hormone.
- You will then give you an infusion of arginine through the cannula to stimulate growth hormone production. The infusion will take 30 minutes.
- Blood samples will be taken from the cannula to measure growth hormone levels every 30 minutes for a period of 2.5 hours.

What will happen after the test?

- Once the test is completed, the cannula will be removed.
- You will need to stay on the endocrine unit for a 1-hour period of observation. You will then be able to go home.
- Your results will be reviewed by the endocrinology doctor.
- You do not have to contact the department for your test result. We will inform you and your GP of your results and any changes to treatment or medication by letter.
- If necessary, you will be called back to 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.



Is there an alternative test?

There are 2 other tests that can be used for assessing your growth hormone response; the insulin tolerance test and the glucagon stimulation test. It is often necessary for 2 different stimulation tests to be performed to diagnose growth hormone deficiency. Once your results have been reviewed by the endocrine team you might be asked to come in for a second test.

Please remember that the timing of endocrine tests is important. Please attend at the time specified on your appointment letter. If you are unable to keep your appointment please contact the department and we will rearrange it for you.

Contacts

If you have any queries:

Phone the endocrine nursing team on **0161 446 3479**

or email: **the-christie.endocrinology@nhs.net**

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham, Salford or Macclesfield. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



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