

Endocrinology

Cortisol day curve

Your doctor has recommended that you have a cortisol day curve to check your cortisol level throughout the day. If you have excess cortisol, this test will help determine if it is adequately controlled.

Cortisol is an essential steroid hormone which is required to keep you healthy and to enable your body to respond to stress and illness. High levels of cortisol can have adverse effects on your weight, bones, blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

Preparation for the test

- You can eat and drink as normal. You do not need to fast prior to the test.
- If you are taking medications to control your cortisol levels, you should take your doses at your usual times. Please contact the endocrine unit if you have any queries.
- You can take your other regular medications. Please bring all of your medications with you when you attend for your test.
- If you are taking **oestrogen containing medications** (e.g. contraceptive pill or HRT), please let us know prior to the test. It is preferable if you can stop these medications for at least 6 weeks before the test as they can affect the results. If you are taking the oestrogen pill for contraception, it is essential that you consider alternative forms of contraception. If you are using oestrogen patch, this can be continued as it will not affect the results of your test. Please contact the endocrine unit if you have any questions.
- Please arrive at least 5 minutes before your specified appointment time.
- The test will last for approximately 6 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.
- A cannula, which is a small tube used to take blood samples, will be inserted into a vein in your arm, and blood samples will be taken from the cannula at specific time points to measure your cortisol level.
- You may eat and drink, and take your regular medications as normal for the rest of the day.

What will happen after the test?

- Once the test is completed, the cannula will be removed and 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.

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- 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.

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:

Call 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.



Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week