

Endocrinology

Oral glucose tolerance test

Your doctor has recommended that you have an oral glucose tolerance test to assess your growth hormone levels.

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.

This test is used for assessment and diagnosis of acromegaly, a rare condition where too much growth hormone is produced. Excessive growth hormone production can cause enlargement of the hands, feet and tongue, change in facial features, sweating, headaches, joint pain, tiredness, sleep apnoea and visual impairment.

Preparation for the test

- You need to **fast from midnight** the night before your test but water is allowed.
- 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 3 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 be seated 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 and glucose.
- You will then be given a glucose drink, and further blood samples will be taken every 30 minutes for a period of 2 hours to measure your growth hormone and glucose levels. Growth hormone levels are normally suppressed by a glucose load, and a lack of suppression therefore indicates that your body is producing too much growth hormone.

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 endocrine doctors.
- We will inform you and your GP of your results and any changes to treatment or medication by letter. 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.



Are there any risks or complications?

The oral glucose tolerance test is very safe and it would be unusual for you to experience any side effects.

Please remember that the timing of endocrine tests is important so 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 please contact:

Endocrine nursing team on **0161 446 3479**

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 or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



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