

WHAT ABOUT GIVING MEDICATIONS ON THE DAY OF THE TEST?

DO NOT GIVE your child their morning medications at home. BRING all of your child's medications with you on the day of the ACTH stimulation test.

WAIT to give the morning dose of your child's medication UNTIL you are told to do so by the MDU staff. You will be asked to take them right after the test is finished.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER THE TEST?

There is no special care after the test. Your doctor will receive the results of the test within 7 to 10 days.

Based on the results of the test, we will tell you if your body can make enough cortisol. We will tell you if you need to make changes to some medications when you are sick. We will tell you if there are any precautions.

We will discuss the results of the test with you at the next clinic visit.

WHO CAN I TALK TO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

You can talk to your transplant doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Transplant Clinic

604-875-2345 ext. 3613

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THE INFORMATION IS INTENDED TO INFORM AND EDUCATE AND IS NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR MEDICAL EVALUATION, ADVICE, DIAGNOSIS OR TREATMENT BY A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL.

ACTH Stimulation Test

For solid organ transplant recipients

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES and CAREGIVERS

Your child is booked to have an ACTH Stimulation Test

on _____ @ 7:30 AM
(date)
in the Medical Day Unit.

Take your last dose of prednisone

on _____ @ 8:00 AM
(date)
and bring your medications to the test to take afterward (including prednisone).



WHAT IS AN ACTH STIMULATION TEST?

Your doctor has asked for an **adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH) stimulation test** to look at the effects of prednisone on your child's ability to make cortisol.

Children living with a solid organ transplant are treated with steroid medications like prednisone. Some children will always stay on a small dose of prednisone. This can make it hard for your body to make normal amounts of cortisol. In that case, the cortisol level will be low.

WHAT IS CORTISOL?

Cortisol is a hormone made by the adrenal gland. Cortisol has many jobs in the body. It helps keep blood sugar and blood pressure levels normal. It also helps the body respond to the stress of illnesses or injury. Some examples of body stress include having the flu or blood infection (illness), having surgery (injury) or being in an accident (injury).

If your body can't make enough cortisol when there is a body stress, it can be dangerous. It can cause low blood pressure, low blood sugar and makes it hard to fight off infection.

WHY DOES MY CHILD NEED THIS TEST?

Steroids can sometimes do the same job as cortisol. Using steroids can sometimes lower the amount of cortisol normally made by the adrenal gland. This is called adrenal suppression. Because your child has been taking prednisone for their transplant, this test is needed to check if they have *adrenal suppression*.

WHY IS THIS TEST IMPORTANT?

This test will show whether your child is able to make enough cortisol to stay healthy. If not, your child may need extra cortisol, until they are able to make enough on their own.

HOW IS THE ACTH STIMULATION TEST DONE?

The whole test takes about 30 minutes. The risks involved are the same as with any needle poke, including a small risk of light-headedness, fainting, infection, excess bleeding, and bruising or inflammation where the needle is inserted.

First, a nurse will insert an IV (a needle with a small tube). Next, your

child will be given ACTH through the IV. The ACTH will stimulate the adrenal gland to make cortisol. Finally, the nurse will take three small samples of blood over 30 minutes, to see how much cortisol is made. Each blood sample will be about 1mL (less than 1/4 teaspoon).

WHERE IS THE ACTH STIMULATION TEST DONE?

The ACTH stimulation test takes place in the **Medical Investigation Facility (MIF)** at BC Children's Hospital, in **Room 2C30**.

HOW DO I PREPARE MY CHILD FOR AN ACTH STIMULATION TEST?

Do not give the regular prednisone dose for 2 days before the test. For example, if you are having your test on Monday, take prednisone on Friday and don't take it on Saturday or Sunday.

You will re-start the prednisone after the blood test.