

ACTH STIMULATION TEST FOR ADRENAL SUPPRESSION

The ACTH (adrenocorticotrophic hormone) stimulation test shows the amount of cortisol that the adrenal gland can produce when stimulated to do so. If the adrenal gland has been suppressed by steroid medications (such as hydrocortisone, prednisone, prednisolone or dexamethasone), the doctor may request this test. This will determine if the body is able to make its own cortisol in normal amounts. The test will be scheduled after the child has been off steroid medication for some time.

The test takes place on the Medical Investigation Facility (MIF), Room 2C30 in the hospital. An intravenous will be started, and small samples of blood taken intermittently. Your child will be given synthetic ACTH which acts like ACTH from the pituitary gland. This will stimulate the adrenal gland to release cortisol. The cortisol will be measured at several intervals over one hour. If the results of this test show that your child is making the right amount of cortisol, s/he will no longer need increased steroids for illness.

It is important for this test to be done when your child is not taking any steroid medication. If there is an illness just before the test, and illness dosing of steroid is given, please call our clinic at 604-875-2117 to cancel and re-book the test.

