

ACTH STIMULATION TEST FOR ADRENAL SUPPRESSION

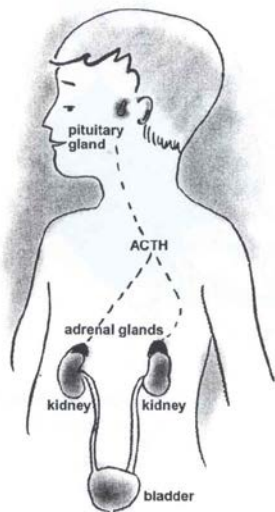
Your doctor has asked your child to have an endocrine assessment (check up by a hormone specialist) and an ACTH stimulation test to find out more about your child's natural cortisol production.

What is cortisol?

Cortisol is a hormone made by the adrenal gland. This hormone does many jobs in the body. It helps to keep the blood sugar and blood pressure in the normal range. It also helps the body respond to illnesses or accidents.

Why does my child need this test?

Your child has been taking a steroid medication, such as hydrocortisone, prednisone, prednisolone or dexamethasone. Another effect of steroids is that they do the job of cortisol. When this happens over a period of time, the adrenal gland rests and does not produce enough cortisol; this is called adrenal suppression. Your child needs this test to check if the adrenal glands have become suppressed.



How is the ACTH stimulation test done?

The test takes place in the **Medical Investigation Facility (MIF), Room 2C30** in the main hospital building. The nurse will start an IV; your child will then be given a dose of synthetic ACTH through the IV. This dose of ACTH will stimulate the adrenal gland to produce cortisol. The nurse will draw several small samples (1 mL, or less than $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon) of blood over 30 minutes or 60 minutes, depending on the kind of test the doctor requests. Then the test is over. There is no special preparation for this test, and no side effects are expected.

NOTE: It is important for this test to be done when your child is not taking any steroid medication. If your child requires steroids for an illness just before the test, please call the MIF at 604-875-3680 to cancel and rebook the test.

Why is this test important?

The results of this test will show if your child's body is making enough cortisol to stay healthy. If not, your child may need cortisol replacement during illness, until his/her body has fully recovered the ability to make its own supply.