

DEXAMETHASONE SUPPRESSION TEST

Your doctor has asked you to do a dexamethasone suppression test to determine if your child's body is making the right amount of a hormone called cortisol. Cortisol is an important hormone made in the adrenal gland, and its job is to promote normal metabolism.

How is this test done?

1. Your doctor will give you the dexamethasone tablet(s) or a prescription for the medication.
2. The blood test can be done at your convenience any day in the week following your doctor's visit.
3. On the night prior to the blood test, the child/teen should take the **dexamethasone tablet(s) at 11 PM**, with water.
4. The blood test needs to be done at **8 AM the next morning** before breakfast. Call your local lab in advance to be sure of their hours of operation. Take your blood test requisition and BC Care Card with you. It is very important to have the blood test the morning after the pills are taken.
5. Some children would like their parents to put EMLA® on the injection site 1½ hours prior to the test, to "numb" the site. EMLA® is a non-prescription cream available at your pharmacy.

When will the doctor have the results?

The doctor will have the results the following week, possibly sooner. The results are expected to show a "very low cortisol level." The dexamethasone tablet has supplied the body with the amount of cortisol it needs, therefore the adrenal gland should not be producing its own cortisol. If the results are not normal, your doctor will call you to discuss this in detail.

Are there any side effects from this test?

No side effects are expected from the dexamethasone, and it will be gone from the body in a couple of days.