

When will I get my results?

Your consultant will receive and review your results, and either write to your GP or discuss them with you at your next clinic appointment.

General information

- Please note that Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust has a no smoking policy. This applies across the site to all the buildings and grounds.
- Car parking charges also apply.

Any questions?

We hope to make your stay as pleasant as possible. If you have any queries or concerns, please contact the Medical Day Case unit (01872 253836), or:

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Further information
For further information contact:
The Pituitary Foundation
Tel: 0845 450 0376
www.pituitary.org.uk



If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

Your glucagon test



One + all | we care

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for patients who have received an appointment to have a glucagon test at the Medical Day Case unit (MDU) at Royal Cornwall Hospital. Your appointment letter will give the time you need to arrive on the MDU.

What is a glucagon test?

This is a test to check how effectively your pituitary gland is working. It measures how well your pituitary gland is regulating two hormones called growth hormone and cortisol.

Why do I need it?

This test is performed at the request of your consultant endocrinologist. It will help your consultant to diagnose any problem with your pituitary gland and plan any treatment you may need.

What is the pituitary gland?

It is a small gland in the base of your brain, a few inches behind the bridge of your nose. It plays a major role in controlling your body's hormone production.

How do I prepare for the test?

Blood tests:

You will need to arrange a '9am cortisol' blood test at your GP surgery, this will need to be performed between 8am - 9am in the morning. This test needs to be completed within 4 weeks of the date of your Glucagon test. If this 9am cortisol is not completed your glucagon test date will be delayed.

Eating and drinking:

You must **NOT** eat or drink anything from midnight on the day of your test.

Medication:

You should **NOT** take either hydrocortisone or levothyroxine medication prior to your test, any other medication you can take as normal. Please bring your medication with you to the test so you can take once the test is completed.

What will the test involve?

On your arrival at MDU a nurse will show you to your bed or chair and complete the necessary paperwork. The nurse will also explain the procedure to you and ensure that you give your verbal consent.

1. You will sit in a chair for the duration of your test, but may lie down if you prefer.
2. We will insert a cannula (small plastic tube) into your arm. This will allow the nurse to obtain blood samples without causing too much discomfort.
3. Before the test begins, we will take baseline blood samples to check your levels of growth hormone, cortisol and glucose.
4. We will then give you an injection of glucagon. In normal circumstances this should stimulate your body to produce a rise in growth hormone, cortisol and glucose.
5. We will take further blood samples 90 minutes after the glucagon injection and then at 30 minute intervals to check your hormone levels. This will allow us to assess your body's response to the stimulation.

How long will it take?

The test will last four hours, but you should allow 6-7 hours for your appointment.

What happens afterwards?

When the test is complete we will remove your cannula and offer you some refreshments. You will be provided with a light lunch and should rest for an hour before you go home. This will ensure you have fully recovered from the test and any side effects you may have felt.

Are there any risks or complications?

The glucagon may cause some side effects such as nausea and abdominal pain. Please tell your nurse if you have any symptoms.

Are there any alternatives?

There is an alternative called an insulin stress test, although this is not suitable for everyone. Your consultant endocrinologist will have assessed you and, taking into account your medical history and current medical condition, decided that a glucagon test is the most appropriate test for you at this time.

What if I don't have the test?

If you feel that you do not want this test, you can decide against it. However, this may prevent accurate diagnosis of your condition and affect any future treatment. If you do decide against the test, please inform the MDU so that we can give your appointment to someone else.