

Contact Details

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References

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email
patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is
accurate and impartial.



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team at patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk



Synacthen Test

Children's Services
Lincoln County Hospital
Pilgrim Hospital Boston
Grantham Hospital
www.ulh.nhs.uk

Why am I having the Synacthen Test?

A Synacthen test uses a special chemical to test how well your adrenal glands make a chemical (hormone) cortisol. It involves stimulating the adrenal glands and then checking to see if they respond. Synacthen is another name for Tetracosactide, the chemical used in the test.

The adrenal glands are glands above each kidney that produce a hormone called cortisol that increases when the body is stressed, to allow it to cope.

If your child is ill and their body doesn't cope with the stress properly, doctors will want to check that the adrenal glands are working by doing the synacthen test.

Sometimes the doctors will check the cortisol level when they are screening for something else. If they find it is low they may want to do a synacthen test.

Before the test

If your child is taking prednisolone, please stop this 3 days before the test and any hydrocortisone and spironolactone on the day of the test, remembering to restart them afterwards.

On the day of the test

Please come to the ward at your booked time, where you will be greeted by one of the nurses who will be looking after your child. She will put some ametop or emla cream on their inner elbows and backs of their hands to numb the area. The cream may itch a little and will stay on for 30 to 60 minutes, after which the doctor will put a cannula in the back of the hand or inner elbow.

When the cannula is put in, some blood will be taken from it and then your child will be given a medicine called Tetracosactide into

it. This medicine may make them feel a little sick, dizzy, sweaty and have a headache. Bloods will then be taken from the tube after 30 and 60 minutes.

If your child feels unwell at any point during the test then please let one of the nurses know.

An hour after they have had the medicine and the two blood tests, you will be allowed home. You will be informed of the results of the test by your Consultant at your follow up outpatient appointment. If the cortisol levels remains low at the end of the test your child will need to start a medicine to help their body cope with stress. Please make sure you give the nurses your contact telephone number so you can receive the results.