

Prolonged 72 Hour Fast

An information guide



Prolonged 72 Hour Fast

Your doctor has recommended that you are admitted for a prolonged 72 hour fast.

What is a prolonged 72 hour fast?

It is a test to establish whether your blood sugar (glucose) levels drop below normal when you don't eat.

The prolonged fast helps to test if your body is producing too much of the hormone called insulin. Insulin is produced by the pancreas gland and responds to the amount of sugar in the blood.

When things are working normally your body should not release much insulin if your blood sugars are low.

How should I prepare for the test?

You should eat normally and not fast in the days leading up to the test.

On the morning of the test, it is advisable to have an early breakfast (before 7am) and then arrive at the time advised by the Patient Investigation Unit (PIU) or Ward staff where this test will take place.

Please bring with you all the medications which you will require for the period of stay in the hospital.

Further specific advice and instruction may be given to you by your own endocrinology doctor or nurse.

What will happen during the test?

You should come to the ward on the date of the test at the time specified.

A cannula (a small needle with a plastic tube attached) will be inserted into a vein in your arm to enable us to take blood samples. You will be allowed to drink water and other sugar free drinks during the test and are urged to exercise and stay active whilst on the ward.

We will monitor your sugar levels by taking finger prick blood samples. The fast lasts for up to 72 hours. You are likely to feel hungry and to take your mind off things you may wish to bring in books, music, etc.

Symptoms of low blood sugar (hypoglycaemia) may include

- Hunger.
- Palpitations.
- Sweating.
- Headache and/or tremor.

Please report any of these symptoms to the staff who are looking after you. If you have had no symptoms of low blood sugar during that time, you may be asked to do some further exercise (such as walking around or climbing some stairs) before further blood testing.

Visitors will be allowed (at visiting times) but you will not be allowed to leave the ward unaccompanied throughout the test.

You should expect to stay at the hospital for up to 72 hours although you may be allowed home earlier if the tests show that your blood sugar has dropped significantly and the test is then concluded.

At that time further samples will be taken from your vein through the plastic cannula. You may stop the test at any time if you wish to do so.

Once you've had something to eat and drink and are feeling fine, you will be discharged. You should be able to undertake normal activities after the test has ended and it should not interfere with your ability to drive home.

What happens after the test?

When the results of the blood test are available, they will be reviewed by the endocrinology team.

You will be informed of the results by letter or at your next outpatient appointment.

If there are any changes to be made to your treatment or if further tests are required, these will be outlined in the letter, or alternatively you may receive a telephone call from one of the endocrinology team.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact your endocrinology doctor or nurse.

Contact Information

Normal working hours (Monday to Friday): the endocrine team (all telephone numbers are direct to consultant's secretaries). At other times (5pm to 9pm) or in case of emergency or urgent advice being required, you should contact your own GP or go to your local Accident and Emergency department.

Fairfield General Hospital

Dr S Rowles, Dr H Smithhurst, Dr L Pichaipillai and Dr S Kouta

Telephone: 0161 778 2676

Department Fax Number: 0161 778 3917

The Royal Oldham Hospital

Dr TK Jagadhish

Telephone: 0161 627 8778

Dr BM Mishra and Dr A Shiraz

Telephone: 0161 778 5431

Department Fax Number: 0161 627 8175

Rochdale Infirmary

Dr PK Prakash

Telephone: 01706 517 032

Department Fax Number: 01706 517 869

North Manchester General Hospital

Professor C Dang, Dr I Malik and Dr S Farook

Telephone: 0161 720 2086

Dr R Khurana, Dr H Chandrasekara and Dr V Arul Devah

Telephone: 0161 604 5349

Department Fax Number: 0161 720 2029

Endocrine Specialist Nurse:

Cristina Edward - 0161 918 4069

Karen Hallett - 0161 627 8388

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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☎ : 0161 627 8770

@ : interpretation@pat.nhs.uk

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For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897


For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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