

Hydrocortisone Day Curve

An information guide



Hydrocortisone Day Curve

Your endocrine doctor or nurse has recommended that you have a hydrocortisone day curve test to check that you are taking the right dose of hydrocortisone medication.

Over time, your hydrocortisone requirements may change due to ageing or changes in body weight. It is important to receive the right dose, as being under or over replaced may have longer term implications.

What is a hydrocortisone day curve test?

This test looks at your cortisol levels throughout the day which checks the adequacy of your hydrocortisone treatment or cortisol reserve. Cortisol is a vital steroid hormone. It is responsible for helping your body to respond to stress and illness. Cortisol also regulates blood pressure, the immune system and blood sugar levels.

Hydrocortisone is taken as a replacement for the natural hormone where this is deficient. This may be due to primary adrenal insufficiency (Addison's disease), or secondary adrenal insufficiency, caused by lack of the hormone which controls the release of cortisol.

How should I prepare for the test?

- You may need to stop oestrogen therapy (HRT, the contraceptive pill) for 6 weeks prior to the test, as advised by your doctor. **If you are stopping contraception, you must ensure that you use alternative contraception to avoid pregnancy.**
- Do not take your hydrocortisone medication on the day of the test
- If you feel unwell without your hydrocortisone medication, please ask someone to accompany you to the test
- Please do remember to bring your hydrocortisone medication with you to your appointment. You will be asked to take your tablets as directed throughout the test
- You can take your other regular medication so please bring this with you on the day of the test
- The test will take most of the day and you may wish to bring in books, music, etc
- You will be allowed to drive after the test.

What will happen during the test?

This test will be carried out in one of the Trust's programmed investigation units (PIUs). A small needle/cannula will be inserted into a vein in your arm, which allows your nurse to obtain repeat blood samples without causing too much discomfort. We will take a baseline value of cortisol. Your first dose of hydrocortisone may then be taken. A nurse will then take further samples from the cannula at 2 hourly intervals to measure cortisol. Further doses of hydrocortisone should be taken as advised, and after blood samples have been taken.

Are there any risks with this test?

Missing your hydrocortisone medication can make you feel dizzy and weak. If you are concerned about not taking it on the morning of the test, please discuss this with your endocrine doctor.

What happens after the test?

Once this test is complete, your cannula will be removed. You will then be able to go home.

You will be informed of the results by letter, or at your next clinic visit.

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

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

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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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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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

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing 17,000 staff and providing a range of hospital and community healthcare services to around 1 million people across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and surrounding areas. Our Care Organisations are responsible for providing our services, delivering safe, high quality and reliable care to the local communities they serve.

The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).



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