

Growth Hormone Suppression Test

What is a growth hormone suppression test?

This is a test ordered by your endocrinologist to determine if you are making too much growth hormone. Growth hormone is produced by the pituitary gland and is needed for proper growth and development in children, as well as proper bone density, muscle tone and fat metabolism in adults. In some people, the pituitary gland produces too much growth hormone, which can lead to a condition called acromegaly. This can cause elevated blood pressure and blood sugar, heart problems, sleep apnea, fatigue and other health problems. You or family members may notice some signs of acromegaly, which may include growth in the size of your hands or feet (rings or shoes may become too small), widening spaces between your teeth, and protruding of your forehead and jaw. With a growth hormone suppression test, blood growth hormone levels will decrease in people who do not have acromegaly but will not decrease sufficiently in people who have this condition.

How is the test performed?

An appointment will be scheduled for you to have the test performed. You will be provided with the location and arrival time. Please plan for at least 2 ½ hours of testing.

An intravenous cannula (IV) will be inserted into a vein in one of your arms and will remain there for the duration of the test. All of your blood samples will be drawn through this catheter, so you will not require any further needle pokes except for finger picks that will be done to check your blood sugar levels at regular intervals. Once the first blood samples are obtained, you will be given a very sweet drink you will need to consume over 5 minutes. After the drink is consumed, the nurse will withdraw blood samples from the IV line every 30 minutes for 2 hours. Once this is completed, the IV line will be removed and you can go home.

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Are there any risks or side effects to this test?

As with any blood test or IV insertion, you may have some bruising or redness at the site where the catheter was inserted. There is also a very small risk of infection.

The glucose drink may cause some nausea as you are drinking it but this will settle quickly.

How do I prepare for the test?

You will need to fast (no food or drinks other than water) after 10:00 pm the night before your test. Please DO drink water the morning of the test. You can bring a snack to eat once the test is completed.

What should I do if I need to cancel?

If you need to cancel your appointment, please call 519-646-6000 ext. 64424 and state your name and test date. It's important to know that there may be a delay in rescheduling your appointment as the availability of test times are limited. If you need to cancel, we ask that you call as soon as possible.