

Clonidine Suppression Test

What is a clonidine suppression test?

This test is performed to rule out a condition called pheochromocytoma, a non-cancerous tumor that most commonly develops in the adrenal glands and releases hormones that cause high blood pressure.

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 4 - 5 hours of testing.

An intravenous (IV) cannula 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.

You will be settled into a darkened room. Your vital signs will be taken once you are settled and then again every 30 minutes. After you have been lying down for 30 minutes, the first blood samples are taken. You will be given clonidine and then further blood samples will be taken.

Once the test is completed and your blood pressure has normalized, the IV will be removed and you will be able to go home. You will be allowed to eat and drink.

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.

You may experience drowsiness, dry mouth, low blood pressure and some dizziness.

How do I prepare for the test?

To prepare for the test, you will have nothing to eat or drink after midnight the night before your test. Do not eat, drink or smoke anything with caffeine or nicotine before your test.

Do not take any acetaminophen or products containing acetaminophen for 1 week before your test.

Dietary restrictions include no walnuts, bananas or vanilla for 1 week prior to your test.

You will need to arrange to have someone to drive you home after the test.

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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.