

The oral glucose tolerance test

Information and advice for parents and carers

Paediatrics

What is an oral glucose tolerance test?

An oral glucose tolerance test is a test to diagnose type 2 diabetes. Your child is having this test because they may be at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes is a condition where the body either doesn't make enough insulin or the insulin it makes doesn't work properly. Insulin is made in the pancreas, which is a gland that is just behind the stomach.

Insulin controls the amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood. It helps glucose get into the body's cells so it can be used for energy.

The test involves your child drinking a glucose (sugary) drink and having a blood test to see how much insulin they produce.

What are the benefits of an oral glucose tolerance test?

The benefit of the oral glucose tolerance test is that it will tell us if your child is making enough insulin. This will help their doctor to diagnose whether they have type 2 diabetes or not, and to plan their treatment.

What are the risks of having an oral glucose tolerance test?

There is a risk that your child may feel or be sick during the test, but this is rare.

What are the risks of not having the test?

If your child does not have this test it will be difficult for their consultant to diagnose if they have type 2 diabetes and plan treatment.

Are there any alternative tests my child can have?

There are no recommended alternatives to this test.

Preparing for the test

Your child must not eat after midnight the night before coming to the hospital but may have sips of plain water to drink. **It is important to follow these instructions or we might have to cancel your child's test.**

You should explain the test to your child before they come to the hospital so that they understand what will happen.

We have a playroom but please feel free to bring your child's favourite toy or comforter with you.

How the test is performed

Please arrive on Priory Ground Ward at Sandwell General Hospital at 8.30am. You will have to spend the full morning and early afternoon in hospital. If your child is also having another test you may need to stay longer.

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When you arrive on the ward the nurse will check a few details like your child's name, address etc. They will also ask about your child's current state of health, and whether they have any medical problems, or have recently had or been in contact with anyone who has had an infectious illness. This is to check your child is well enough to have the test. The nurse will also give you the opportunity to ask any questions you might have about the test.

Do not worry if your child becomes upset during the test, this is normal and will depend on your child's age and how much they understand about what is happening.

Please do not give your child anything to eat or drink during the test, unless the nurse asks you to do so.

This is what will happen:

1. Your child's height and weight will be measured so we can work out the right amount of glucose drink to give.
2. 'Magic cream' (called Emla) will be placed on the back of your child's hands and on the inside of their elbows. This is a local anaesthetic cream which numbs the area so that it won't hurt when they have a cannula (small plastic tube) put in. Magic cream takes about 1 hour to work so we will place a clear dressing over the cream to keep it in place.
3. Your child will have their cannula put in by a doctor. The cannula will be put into one of the areas that have been numbed either back of their hand or inside of their elbow. Your child may get anxious or upset when the cannula is being inserted. It will help if you stay with them for comfort.
4. The doctor will then take a small sample of blood from the cannula.
5. Your child will be given a glucose drink which they must drink quickly.
6. The doctor will take another sample of blood out of the cannula after 2 hours.
7. The blood samples will be sent away for testing in the laboratory.

After the test

You will be able to go home once your child has had something to eat and drink and their cannula has been removed. Your child should eat and drink as normal when they go home. Make sure that they eat an evening meal that includes carbohydrates such as bread, potatoes, pasta or rice. This will help to make sure that their body has a good store of energy.

How do I get the results of the test?

Your child's doctor will discuss the results of the test with you at your child's next outpatient appointment.

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How to find us

The test will be carried out on Priory Ground Ward at Sandwell General Hospital. This is on the ground floor of the main hospital in the Children's Unit. You can ask for directions at the main reception desk near the main entrance to the hospital. Staff will be happy to direct you to where you need to go.

Address:

Sandwell General Hospital
West Bromwich
West Midlands
B71 4HJ

Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns about the oral glucose tolerance test please contact:

Dr Agwu - Consultant Paediatrician
0121 507 3358 (secretary)

Further information

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites www.swbh.nhs.uk and www.swbhengage.com, follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs.

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- Patient UK Professional Reference, 'Glucose tolerance tests', July 2012
- 'Diagnostics of Endocrine Function in Children and Adolescents', M.B. Ranke, 2003

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5495 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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Incorporating City, Sandwell and Rowley Regis Hospitals
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ML4300
Issue Date: October 2013
Review Date: October 2015