

Short Synacthen Test Information Sheet

The Short Synacthen Test is used in the diagnosis of Addison's disease, a disorder of the adrenal gland (small glands near the kidneys) where the body does not produce enough of the hormone, cortisol.

Why might I be undertaking this test?

Your doctor may be asking you to undertake this test to investigate whether you have adrenal insufficiency, i.e. your adrenal glands are not producing enough of the hormone cortisol. Symptoms include tiredness, weight loss, and other non-specific symptoms. If you have any further questions regarding the test please speak to your doctor.

Where will the test take place?

The test will be arranged by your doctor. For more information on where you will need to go please speak to your doctor, or a nurse.

How do I prepare for the test?

There are no strict procedures for preparation for the test, you can eat and drink as normal. If you have any concerns please speak to your doctor.

What does the test involve?

The test takes around half an hour and is conducted as follows:

- A blood sample will be taken
- You will immediately be given an injection of 250µg Synacthen (a drug that stimulates the adrenal gland)
- A second blood sample will be taken 30mins later

Are there any side effects?

Synacthen carries a small risk of anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction). As such, this procedure will be carried out under medical supervision.

What do I do if I cannot keep the test appointment?

If you cannot keep your appointment please speak to your doctor to rearrange the test.

How will I be informed of the results?

The laboratory will report the results to your doctor.

Who should I contact for more information on the test?

If you require more information on the test please speak to your doctor, alternatively you can contact the Clinical Biochemistry Department at Peterborough City Hospital using the contact details below.

Clinical Biochemistry and Immunology Department Telephone 01733 678468

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