

Oral Glucose Tolerance Test

Patient Information

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Why is an oral glucose tolerance test carried out?

Some people's bodies are unable to use glucose (sugar) properly; for example, if they have Diabetes Mellitus or another condition termed "Impaired Glucose Tolerance" (which may progress to diabetes in some patients). It is important that this is detected so that, if necessary, appropriate advice and treatment can be given. Often this problem can be detected by a single blood glucose level but occasionally it has to be checked by doing an oral glucose tolerance test.

What do we look for in this test?

We measure the amount of glucose in your blood both before and after giving you a glucose drink. This tells us how well your body handles glucose.

Limitations and risks of this test

The accuracy of results depends on the quality of your sample so it is very important that you follow exactly the instructions on preparing for and during the test.

Some people may experience some discomfort, or a feeling of nausea or light-headedness after the glucose drink. Usually this soon passes.

There is a slight possibility that you may vomit following the glucose drink. If this happens, please tell the person doing the test. The test will be discontinued. If you feel unwell at any time, please tell the person doing the test.

Alternatives to this test

There are no alternatives to this test that will provide the required information.

What happens to your results?

The samples will be tested later in the day and the results of the test will be sent to your doctor, who will explain what they mean and what, if any treatment you may need. Please make an appointment to see your doctor one week after the test. Laboratory staff will not have the results so please wait for the doctor who asked for the test to be done to discuss the results with you.

You may have an entirely normal result.

If your test shows that your body does not clear glucose quickly enough, you may have Diabetes Mellitus.

Some people have partly abnormal results. This is known as Impaired Glucose Tolerance which sometimes progresses to Diabetes Mellitus.

Whatever your results your doctor will need to discuss lifestyle changes with you e.g. diet, monitoring and possibly other treatments.

Instructions

Please read the information and carefully follow the instructions, as failure to do so may lead to an inaccurate result and the need to repeat the test.

Before coming for the test

- For 3 days before the test you should eat your normal diet.
- Only take your usual amount of exercise during these 3 days.
- You should not eat anything from 10:00 pm the night before the test until after the test is completed. Please do not smoke until the test is completed. You may drink plain unflavoured water freely but no other drinks.
- If you regularly take medicines, take these as usual. If any should be taken with food it may be advisable to delay taking them until after the test. If you are unsure about this please contact your doctor. Please bring a list of any medicines that you take and give the list to the person who does the test, as some medicines may affect the test.

The test itself

On arrival at the clinic you will have a blood sample taken. This will be tested immediately. What happens next depends on the result of this first test. In most cases you will be asked to take a drink of glucose following which there will be two further blood samples taken after 1 and 2 hours.

There is, therefore, a lot of waiting involved between the blood samples but it is important for the validity of the test that you sit quietly during this time. You might like to bring something to read. You must continue to fast (nothing to eat or drink other than plain water) until the test is completed. You may wish to bring a bottle of water with you. Smoking is not permitted during the test.

How long will it take?

The test should be complete in about 2 ½ hours. Please note that in some cases it will not be necessary to perform the whole test depending on the results of the first blood sample. If this is the case, you may be given an appointment for a further fasting blood test.

If you require further information about this test please contact the:

Clinical Biochemistry Department
Pathology at Wigan and Salford
Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust
Stott Lane
Salford
M6 8HD

Telephone: 0161 206 4958 or 0161 206 4959

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

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Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website: https://www.wvl.nhs.uk/patient_information/leaflets/

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in the department/ward.

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