



Glucagon test

Information for parents, guardians, and carers from Child Health

You have been given this leaflet as concerns have been raised about your child's growth, and a Glucagon test has been planned. This leaflet explains the following.

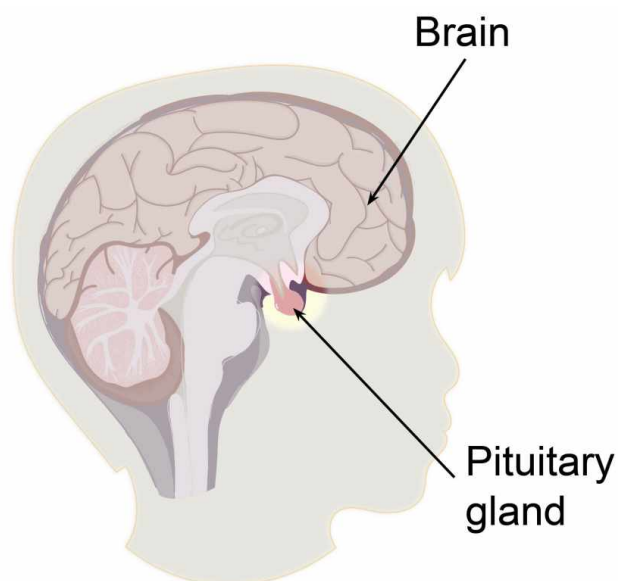
- What a Glucagon test is.
- What will happen if you choose not to have the test.
- What happens before, during, and after the test.
- What the possible side effects are.
- When you should receive the results.

We hope this leaflet answers some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact Dolphin Ward on 01227 864052.

What is a Glucagon test?

A Glucagon test is a way of checking growth hormone produced by the pituitary gland.

The pituitary gland is a small pea-sized gland at the base of the brain. The pituitary gland produces hormones important for growth, puberty, and well-being.



Position of the pituitary gland

What is growth hormone?

Growth hormone is a hormone produced by the pituitary gland. A child needs this hormone to grow. When the pituitary gland releases growth hormone into the bloodstream, it travels to the body's tissues. This stimulates growth.

Growth hormone levels can change during the day. We cannot use a single blood test to check if your child is producing enough of it. So, we use a stimulation test. During this test, glucagon is used to stimulate your child's pituitary gland. This releases growth hormone. We then measure your child's response over 3 hours.

Are there alternatives to this test for accurately assessing the levels of growth hormone?

No. Without the test we can only:

- monitor your child's growth in clinic; and
- check the IGF-1 (the indirect marker of growth hormone), and this is not as accurate.

The Glucagon test is needed to diagnose growth hormone deficiency. Growth hormone treatment cannot be prescribed until the test is complete.

What happens before my child's test?

- Your child will be given an appointment to come to Dolphin Ward for their test.
- **It is important to talk to your child about their test. Explain everything as simply as possible.**
- Children over the age of 10 years may be asked to take medication twice a day for 48 hours before their test. If your child needs to take this medication, this will be discussed with you in clinic when the test is ordered.
- Children need to fast before a Glucagon test. This means no food or drink (except water) from midnight the night before their test. During the test they can only drink water.

What happens on the day of their test?

- Please report to the reception desk in the Children's Assessment Centre at Kent and Canterbury Hospital.
- A nurse will greet you and your child, and take you both through to Dolphin Ward for your child's test. Please use this time to ask any last minute questions. Remember that you can withdraw your consent for treatment at any time.
- Your child will have a bed on the ward during their stay.
- A nurse will apply anaesthetic cream to numb the area, before inserting a cannula into a vein. A tiny plastic tube remains in the vein. The cannula acts as a "tap", so blood can be taken repeatedly without having to keep inserting needles to collect it.
- The glucagon is given as an intra muscular injection into your child's thigh.

- Blood samples are taken every 30 minutes for 3 hours via the cannula.
- Your child's blood glucose levels are monitored throughout their test.
- Your child is advised to sit on their bed during the test. They are still able to do activities such as:
 - crafts
 - playing
 - using electronic devices (such as tablets and smart phones), or
 - watching TV.

Bringing things with you to help entertain your child would be helpful.

Are there any side effects to having a Glucagon test?

- Your child may feel slightly uncomfortable during the test. They may also be frustrated at having to sit still. They will be able to use the toilet as normal during the test.
- Blood glucose levels can drop and cause your child to feel a little sick. Their blood glucose is monitored throughout the test. Very occasionally the test is stopped and the child given a dose of glucose. However, this is rare.

What happens after their test?

- After their test, your child will be offered food and drink. They will need to stay on the ward for an hour after eating. This is to make sure their blood glucose is at a good level before leaving hospital.
- Very rarely, a child's blood glucose level is slightly low after the test. If this happens, we may delay their discharge home, and continue to monitor them in hospital.
- Give your child a high carbohydrate meal at tea time, such as pasta, rice, bread, or potatoes. These foods will replace their energy stores.

How long will it be until the results are available?

Results can take 6 to 8 weeks. They are usually given at your child's next outpatient appointment, or by letter or phone call.

Contact details

If you need to cancel or change your appointment, or you have any questions or concerns about the test, please contact Dolphin ward on 01227 864052.

What do you think of this leaflet?

We welcome feedback, whether positive or negative, as it helps us to improve our care and services.

If you would like to give us feedback about this leaflet, please fill in our short online survey. Either scan the QR code below, or use the web link. We do not record your personal information, unless you provide contact details and would like to talk to us some more.

Giving feedback about this leaflet



<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MDOBU4/>

If you would rather talk to someone instead of filling in a survey, please call the Patient Voice Team.

- **Patient Voice Team**

Telephone: 01227 868605

Email (ekhuft.patientvoice@nhs.net)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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