

Information for Patients having a 1mg Overnight Dexamethasone Suppression Test

Diabetes and Endocrine Centre Patient information

Why has my doctor asked me to have this test?

This test will see if your body is overproducing a hormone called cortisol. This is the first test for diagnosing Cushing's.

What is Cushing's?

Cushing's is a collection of symptoms caused by very high levels of cortisol in the blood. Symptoms can include:

- weight gain
- muscle or bone weakness
- fat deposits that develop in the face causing it to become round
- thinning skin that bruises easily
- reddish-purple stretch marks on thighs buttocks, stomach, arms, legs and breast

What is Dexamethasone?

Dexamethasone is a man-made corticosteroid. You will be given it to lower your level of Adrenocorticotrophic hormone. Adrenocorticotrophic is the hormone which controls cortisol. It should lower your amount of blood cortisol.

About the test

You do not need to stay in hospital for this test. You can eat and drink as normal throughout the test. Take medications as normal.

You do not need to do anything to prepare for the test. It is important to tell your endocrinologist if you are taking steroids in any form. This includes creams, shampoos, nasal sprays and inhalers.

What does the test involve?

You need to **book a blood test for 9am** in the morning.

You will be given two 500mcg Dexamethasone tablets to take at home. Take **both** of these **the night before** you have the blood test. Take the tablets between 11pm and midnight.

Where can I find support and information?

The Pituitary Foundation

Brunswick Court
Brunswick Square
Bristol
BS2 8PE

Tel: **01173 701333**

www.pituitary.org.uk

Endocrine Nurse Specialist

Bournemouth Diabetes and Endocrine Centre
Royal Bournemouth Hospital
Castle Lane East
Bournemouth
BH7 7DW

Tel: **0300 0194544**

uhd.endocrine.nurse@nhs.net

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or email **uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net**.

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