

Sweat Test Information Sheet for Patients/Parents

This fact sheet has been produced to provide information for people who have been referred for a sweat test. In addition, it explains what the results may mean and how you can get the results of your test.

What is a sweat test?

A sweat test measures the amount of salt that is in the sweat.

Why does this need to be carried out?

The test is carried out on children or adults who are having:-

- recurrent chest infections
- frequent and unexplained pale stools
- problems gaining weight or growing properly

or as part of a screening programme. There are also other rarer indications for a sweat test.

If you have further questions regarding the need for a sweat test in yourself or your child, please speak to the doctor who has referred you for this test as they can give you further information

Who does this test?

Pathology laboratory staff carry out the test

Does the test hurt?

Some people experience a tingling sensation on the arm or leg where the sweat has been collected. No needles are involved

How is the test carried out?

Two special pads that encourage sweat production are placed on the lower arm or leg. These are secured in place and a small electric current is passed through the pad from a battery box to further stimulate the sweating process. The test is not painful, although a tingling sensation may occur. The pads are left in place for about 5 minutes and then removed. There may be a red mark where the pads have been in contact with the skin.

This is a usual phenomenon and should fade within a few hours. The skin is then carefully washed with pure water and dried. A sweat collector is applied firmly to the area using a strap. You will then be asked to wait for about 30 minutes for the sweat to be collected into the device. During that time you (or your child) is free to read, play or eat.

Please avoid salty foods such as crisps as it may affect the results of the test.

The sweat collector is then removed and taken to the laboratory for analysis

The results

In most cases the results will clearly show either a high (abnormal) or normal salt level in the sweat.

Sometimes the test will need to be repeated. This may be because not enough sweat has been collected.

How long will it take to get results?

The tests are performed in the laboratory on the same day and the test results should be available within 2-3 days.

Who will inform me of the results?

The doctor who sent you for this test will discuss with you when and how to get your results and whether any further investigations will be needed.

For further details or other enquires regarding this collection, please telephone:

- Clinical Chemistry: 01535 293456

Or

- Central Separating: 01535 292910