Glucagon Test for Growth Hormone and/or Cortisol

Why is this test being done?
This test is done to find out how much growth hormone your child’s pituitary gland can produce, and how much cortisol is being made by the adrenal gland. A medicine called glucagon is given to trigger the release of growth hormone and ACTH. ACTH is a hormone which, in turn, triggers the release of cortisol from the adrenal gland.

How is the test done?
We start by placing an IV in your child’s vein. This is so we can draw blood every 30 minutes to check the levels without having to poke your child each time. Next, the medicine (glucagon) is given to your child as an injection - a shot in the arm or thigh. Blood is drawn through the IV every 30 minutes to check the blood sugar, growth hormone and/or cortisol levels. Glucagon can cause low blood sugar. Your child may feel a little lightheaded, tired or nauseated. Plan on being at Children’s for the entire morning.

How do I prepare my child for the test?
• After midnight on the night before the test your child needs to be fasting. Fasting means that your child may not have any food or liquid other than water. Daily medicine (thyroid hormone or antibiotics) may be taken at regular times with small sips of water. Talk with your doctor in advance about what to do if your child is taking a glucocorticosteroid such as hydrocortisone, prednisone, or dexamethasone.
• Your child should be feeling well and not have a fever the day of the test.
• Bring a snack for your child to eat after the test.
• Bring books, toys, or games for your child to pass time during the test. We have a TV and VCR/DVD player so feel free to bring a video for your child to watch.

Will my child have pain?
Your child may feel pain or be uneasy with the needle pokes. You know your child best, and we will work with you to make this more pleasant. No matter the level of their pain, believe they are hurting and respond right away.
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For questions or to reschedule the test

- For questions about the test call the Endocrinology Nurses 206-987-2640, option 4
- To cancel or reschedule the test, call the Scheduling office: 206-987-5610

Where do we go for the test?

This test is done in the Ambulatory Infusion Unit at the Seattle main campus within the Cancer and Blood Disorders Center, as well as the Ambulatory Infusion Unit in Bellevue. We do a lot more than chemotherapy here. Many tests that require an IV are done in the Infusion Units.

To get to the Infusion Unit in Seattle, enter Seattle Children’s at the Ocean entrance and go to the level 8 Mountain registration to check in. This is the Cancer and Blood Disorders Center registration desk. Once checked in, please have a seat in the waiting area and someone will come out to meet you.

For testing done in Bellevue, please check in at the main reception desk and someone will come out to meet you.

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child’s nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.