

Sweat Testing Procedure

And

Commonly Asked Questions

Overview

The sweat test has been the "gold standard" for diagnosing cystic fibrosis (CF) for more than 40 years. When it is performed by trained technicians, and evaluated in an experienced, reliable laboratory, the sweat test is still the best test to diagnose CF. It is recommended that the sweat test be performed in a Cystic Fibrosis Foundation-accredited care center where strict guidelines are followed to ensure the accuracy of the results. The test can be performed on individuals of any age. However, some infants may not make enough sweat for the laboratory to analyze. If an infant does not produce enough sweat on the first sweat test, it should be repeated to collect more.

What happens during a sweat test?

The sweat test determines the amount of chloride in the sweat. There are no needles involved in the procedure. In the first part of the test, a colorless, odorless chemical, known to cause sweating, is applied to a small area on an arm or leg. An electrode is then attached to the arm or leg, which allows the technician to apply a weak electrical current to the area to stimulate sweating. Individuals may feel a tingling sensation in the area, or a feeling of warmth. This part of the procedure lasts approximately five minutes. The second part of the test consists of cleaning the stimulated area and collecting the sweat on a piece of filter paper or gauze or in a plastic coil. Thirty minutes later, the collected sweat is sent to a hospital laboratory for analysis. The entire collection procedure takes approximately one hour.

What does the sweat test reveal?

Your physician has asked that this test be performed to rule out the presence of CF, an inherited disorder of the lungs, intestines and sweat glands. Children and adults with CF have an increased amount of sodium and chloride (salt) in their sweat. In general, sweat chloride concentrations less than mmol/L are normal (does not have CF); values between 40 to 60 mmol/L are borderline, and sweat chloride concentrations greater than 60 mmol/L are consistent with the diagnosis of CF. For individuals who have CF, the sweat chloride test will be positive from birth. Once a test result is positive, it is always positive. Sweat test values do not change from positive to negative or negative to positive, as a person grows older. Sweat test values also do not vary when individuals have colds or other temporary illnesses.

Is there any preparation for the sweat test?

There are no restrictions on activity or diet or special preparations before the test. However, one should not apply creams or lotion to the skin 24 hours before the test. All regular medications may be continued and will have no effect on the test results.

When are sweat test results made available?

The result of the sweat test is usually made available to your physician on the next working day after the test is performed. In a small number of cases, the quantity of sweat obtained is not sufficient to give an accurate result, and the test may need to be repeated.

Can the test results be inconclusive?

Yes. In a small number of cases, the test results fall into "borderline" range between not having CF and indicative of CF. In these situations, repeat sweat tests, as well as other diagnostic procedures, may need to be carried out. These will only be done after consultation with a physician.

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To Schedule Test at TGH:

1. Contact TGH Laboratory #813-844-7284
2. Ask for Special Chemistry and schedule morning appointment. Our office must have 7 – 10 business days to process the insurance authorization if required.
3. Notify our office (813-259-8767) of the date and time.

Directions to Tampa General Hospital

FROM I-4, take I-275 South to Exit 44 (Ashley St.). Take Ashley Street to Kennedy Blvd. Turn Right on Kennedy Blvd. and proceed to Hyde Park Ave. Make a left hand turn onto Hyde Park Ave. and continue over the bridge to Davis Islands staying in the left lane to TGH.

FROM Rte. 60 or Rte. 41, take Kennedy Blvd. to Hyde Park Ave. Turn left onto Hyde Park Ave. and continue over the bridge to Davis Islands staying in the left lane to TGH.

FROM the Leroy Selmon Expressway- Westbound (Crosstown Expressway). Take the Hyde Park Ave. exit onto Brorein Ave. and continue to the first traffic light. Turn left onto Hyde Park Ave. and continue over the bridge to Davis Islands staying in the left lane to TGH.

FROM the Leroy Selmon Expressway- Eastbound (Crosstown Expressway). Take the Willow Ave. exit to Platt St. and continue straight on Platt St. to Hyde Park Ave. (three traffic lights). Make a right turn onto Hyde Park Ave. and continue over the bridge to Davis Islands staying in the left lane to TGH.

FROM the south, take I-75 to the Leroy Selmon Expressway-Westbound (Crosstown Expressway). Take the Hyde Park Ave. exit onto Brorein Ave. and continue to the first traffic light. Turn left onto Hyde Park Ave. and continue over the bridge to Davis Islands staying in the left lane to TGH.

FROM the north. Take I-75 to I-275 South to Exit 44 (Ashley St.). Take Ashley Street to Kennedy Blvd. Turn Right on Kennedy Blvd. And proceed to Hyde Park Ave. Make a left hand turn onto Hyde Park Ave. and continue over the bridge to Davis Islands staying in the left lane to TGH.

Parking Information

The parking garage is owned by the City of Tampa. The City charges an hourly rate for parking. Handicapped Parking is conveniently located on the 2nd and 3rd levels of the parking garage.

Once at Tampa General Hospital, go to Admissions (main lobby) and specifically ask for Carrie Santafemia in Admitting.

Tampa General Hospital 813-844-7000

Internet address: www.tgh.org

To Schedule Test at ACH:

4. Contact All Children's Hospital Laboratory #800-456-4543
5. Ask for Special Chemistry and schedule appointment. Our office must have 7 – 10 business days to process the insurance authorization if required.
6. Notify our office (813-259-8767) of the date and time.

Directions to All Children's Hospital

From the north, take I-275 South to I-175 (Exit 9) and continue until it ends. Turn right onto 4th Street south. Continue to 8th Avenue South. Turn right, Visitor parking will be on your left.

From the south, take I-275 North to I-175 (Exit 9) and continue until it ends. Turn right onto 4th Street south. Continue to 8th Avenue South. Turn right, Visitor parking will be on your left.

Go to Children's Health Center and proceed to the 3rd floor. Go to Central Registration and register (727-892-8585). After you have registered, you will be directed to the main hospital for the test.

All Children's Hospital 800-456-4543 or 727-898-7451

Internet address: www.allkids.org

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