

Sweat test

Information for patients, parents and guardians

Your doctor has requested that your child has a sweat test. This is usually done on children who are consistently underweight, have loose stools or have repeated chest infections.

The test is used to find out whether or not your child has cystic fibrosis. It works by measuring the amount of salt (sodium chloride) in your child's sweat. A high salt content can indicate cystic fibrosis.

What is cystic fibrosis?

Cystic fibrosis is a condition that affects one in every 2,500 children. The condition causes their mucus to be of a thicker, stickier consistency. This can cause chest infections and/or problems with the digestion of food.

The test

The test is performed by a specially trained nurse in the children's outpatient department.

Please tell the nurse before the test if your child is taking any medication as this can change the results.

It may be useful to bring your child's favourite toy and a drink with you as you may be in the department for more than an hour during the test.



The arm is prepared and two gel pads are placed on to the arm using Velcro straps.



The pads are connected to a small metal box, which makes the arm sweat by passing a low electrical charge between the pads. After about five minutes the gel pads are removed and the arm is wiped.

A collecting duct (small blue disk) is then placed on the arm with a Velcro strap. The disk is used to collect the sweat and this usually takes 30 to 40 minutes. If, after 40 minutes the amount of sweat collected in the disc is insufficient the test may be repeated on the other arm.



Sometimes, the pads and collecting duct might be placed on the leg or the back instead.

When the test is finished the sweat is sent to the laboratory for testing.

The doctor who has asked for your child to have a sweat test will talk to you about the results when they are available.

Safety

A sweat test is a safe test and most children have it without any problems. Your child may feel a mild tickling or pricking feeling on their arm and it may become red but this will fade over a few hours.

In some cases your doctor might ask for the test to be repeated.

The appointment

The sweat test clinic is run on a set day of the week and an appointment will be sent to you.

If you are not able to make the appointment or if your child is unwell, contact the children's outpatient department as soon as possible in order to arrange another appointment.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact

The children's outpatient department: 023 8120 4075

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

www.uhs.nhs.uk/childrenshospital