

# Routine pregnancy testing information for young people receiving systemic anti-cancer treatment (SACT)

## Information for children, families and carers

This factsheet explains why all female patients who have started their periods are asked to have a routine pregnancy test before each cycle of systemic anti-cancer therapy (SACT).

### Why do I need to do a pregnancy test?

The NHS Commissioning Board Special Health Authority and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have said that all female patients who have started their periods should take a pregnancy test before having certain procedures.

All female patients who have started their periods need to have a pregnancy test before each cycle of SACT. This is because chemotherapy and radiotherapy can carry a risk to unborn babies, particularly in the very early stages of pregnancy.

### What does the test involve?

We will ask you for a urine (wee) sample:

- on the first day of each course of chemotherapy
- before you start radiotherapy

You will do the urine sample in private, and the result will be available the same day.

You may be asked to agree to the pregnancy test yourself, or your parent/the person with parental responsibility may be asked to consent on your behalf. This will depend on your age.

### What happens next?

#### If the test result is negative (you are not pregnant)

We will tell you (if you have asked to be informed). We will also record the result in your medical notes.

#### If the result is positive (you are pregnant)

Your age and circumstances will determine who will need to be told that you are pregnant.

## Who will be told the test result?

The result will be recorded in your medical notes.

Your doctor will be told the result of the pregnancy test. They will decide if your chemotherapy or radiotherapy can still go ahead or whether it needs to be delayed.

If we need to tell your parents/carers about the result, we will talk to you first. If you are pregnant and would like help telling your parents, this can be arranged.

Depending on your age, the hospital safeguarding team may need to be informed. The team are here to protect patients who may require extra support to keep them safe.

## Can I refuse to be tested?

You can refuse to be tested. If we feel that you can consent to the test and you choose not to go ahead, the risks will be discussed with you and a note made in your medical records. However, we recommend that all girls who have had their first period are tested.

If we feel that your parent/the person with parental responsibility should consent for the test on your behalf, and they choose that it is not right for you, the risks will be discussed with you both and a note will be put in your medical records.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality means that we will not share information about you without your agreement. The only exception to this is if we think that the health, safety or welfare of you or someone else is at risk. If we need to share information with anyone else, we will explain to you why we need to do this. Any healthcare professional you speak to or ask any questions will respect your right to confidentiality.

## Who can I talk to if I have any questions?

If you have any questions about pregnancy testing, you can talk to:

- your doctor/nurse (while you are in hospital)
- your parents/carers
- a trusted authority figure (such as your teacher or school nurse)
- your GP

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