

# Patient information

## Cannulated Prolactin Test

### What is a Cannulated Prolactin Test?

A test to measure the prolactin hormones in your blood before and after 2 hours of rest.

### Why would I need this procedure?

Your doctor has recommended that you have a cannulated prolactin test to check if there is a true over secretion of prolactin hormone in your blood or just stress induced.

Prolactin is a hormone that is mainly secreted by our pituitary gland (often called the master gland, a pea size gland situated in a bony hollow just behind the nose bridge). This is often called the “milk hormone” because it stimulates milk production after birth, but it is also produced in men in smaller quantities. It can also be raised during stress.

### What are the symptoms that have led to me having this procedure?

You might be experiencing the following symptoms: loss of periods (female), infertility, low or lack of libido, weight gain, bloated stomach, lethargy/exhaustion, falling asleep during the day, headaches, milk/fluid excreting from nipples when not pregnant (males can experience this too).

### What are the alternatives?

There are no alternatives to this test.

### What are the expected benefits of having the test?

This test will help your doctor find out if you have hyperprolactinaemia (raised levels of the hormone prolactin in the blood stream) and prolactinoma (a prolactin secreting growth on the pituitary gland).

### What are the potential risks?

A cannula (tiny plastic tube) will be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand using a needle. The cannulation process is similar to that of a blood test.

Associated risks with cannulation or a blood test may include:

- multiple punctures to locate veins
- bleeding from puncture site
- bruising
- haematoma (blood build up under the skin)
- fainting or feeling lightheaded
- infection (a slight risk any time the skin is broken)
- phlebitis (inflammation of the vein)

Keeping pressure on the puncture site for a few minutes after the needle is removed will help to reduce bruising

## Preparation for your test.

You do not need to fast for this test (unless advised by your clinician). You can take your usual medications on the day of the test (unless advised not to do so). If in doubt, please contact your endocrine nurse specialist on the number provided below.

## Females

If you are using an oral contraceptive pill, or oral HRT you may need to stop them for six weeks prior to your test as they can affect results (please discuss with the endocrine specialist nurse for further guidance). If you are using an HRT patch you may continue to do so.

**If you are stopping the contraceptive pill you must use an alternative contraceptive to avoid pregnancy.**

## All patients

If you are taking any anti-depressants, anti-anxiety, sleeping tablets and/or anti-sickness medications, it is important you tell your endocrine specialist nurse before you come for your appointment as these may need to be stopped.

## What happens during the test?

It is important that you arrive for your appointment time as stated in your appointment letter. You will be asked to empty your bladder prior to the start of the test. A cannula (a small plastic tube) will be inserted in your vein and a blood sample will be taken to check your baseline prolactin hormone. Afterwards, you will be asked to rest in bed for 2 hours. After 2 hours of rest, another blood sample will be taken to measure your prolactin hormone. This time, the test is finished and you will be allowed to move and be discharged if you feel well.

## Will I have an anaesthetic?

No

## How will I feel afterwards?

This test should not affect your normal activities of daily living.

## How long will I be in hospital?

You will be in the hospital for approximately 3 hours.

## What should I do when I go home?

In most cases, patients resume their normal activities.

## How soon will I be able to resume normal activities?

In most cases, this test should not affect your normal activities.

## Will I have to come back to hospital?

Depending on the test results, further tests may be required.

## When can I return to work?

There are no work restrictions involved for this test as in most cases, patients resume their normal activities after the test

## Consent

Although you consent for this test, you may at any time withdraw such consent. Please discuss this with your endocrine team.

## Sources of information

For queries concerning this leaflet or your procedure please contact:

### Endocrine Team at ESHT

Telephone: 0300 131 5910 - EDGH and CQ

Opening Hours: 8am – 4pm (Monday – Friday except Bank Holidays)

## Important information

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner

## Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 or by email at:

[esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

## Hand hygiene

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

## Other formats

**If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.**

**Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: [esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net)**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

### **Consultant Endocrinologists (ESHT):**

Dr David Till, Dr Umesh Dashora, Dr P. Sathis Kumar, Dr Ashref Bdiri, Dr. Koshy Jacob,  
Dr Shakeel Ahmad, Dr Sadekh Elrokh

### **Biochemistry Consultants (ESHT):**

Dr Yvette Lolin, Dr Hagosa Abraha, Dr Abd Al Hasan, Dr Indra Ramasamy

### **Endocrine Specialist Nursing Team (ESHT):**

Mrs Maria Ravelo (Senior Endocrine Specialist Nurse)

Miss Angel Johnson (Endocrine Specialist Nurse)

Mrs Debby Gordon (Endocrine Assistant Practitioner)

The Endocrinology Department has agreed this patient information leaflet.

Next review date: February 2025

Responsible clinician/authors: Mrs Maria Ravelo (Senior ESN)  
Mr Aldons Chua (TWS ESN)

© East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust – [www.esht.nhs.uk](http://www.esht.nhs.uk)