

Arginine vasopressin (AVP) test to assess for Cushing's disease

Information for patients

Your endocrinologist has asked us to arrange an arginine vasopressin test to help with the diagnosis of Cushing's disease. We enclose an appointment, if this is not convenient, please let us know so that we can reschedule.

How should I prepare for the test?

We ask you to fast (avoiding both food and drink) from midnight before the test.

If you are taking any steroid treatments (tablets, inhalers, creams) please don't take these on the evening and morning before the test- you can take these after the test is complete so, please bring them with you.

If you are taking metyrapone, osilodrostat or ketoconazole medication for Cushing's syndrome, please omit these for the week before the test.

The week before the test we will arrange a blood test to check your sodium (salt) levels are not low.

What happens during the test?

On the day of the test, a nurse will insert a cannula into your arm and draw blood samples. They will then administer a medication called desmopressin (DDAVP) which stimulates hormone production from your pituitary gland. The nurses will take blood samples every 15 minutes for 1 hour and then 2 hours later to measure your cortisol (steroid) and adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) hormone levels. The test should take about 3.5 hours.

What should I do after the test?

On the day of the test we advise to limit fluid intake to 1.5 litres (3 pints total) to reduce the possible risk of your sodium (salt) levels falling.

When will I get my test results?

Your endocrinologist will be back in touch with you by letter or telephone with the results which may take 3 weeks to process.