Pathology Department

Glucose Tolerance Test (GTT)

Your doctor has requested a glucose tolerance test to investigate how well your body deals with sugar. The test involves a finger prick test and two blood samples being collected, one fasting and one two hours after you have drunk a quantity of glucose drink. In most cases these samples will be taken by a procedure known as Phlebotomy or Venepuncture, i.e. taking blood from a vein. This information sheet tells you what the test is and how you need to prepare for it.

Why is the test performed?
The glucose tolerance test is used to investigate whether you might be diabetic by looking at how your body uses glucose, which is a sugar that is found in many foods. People whose body cannot use glucose normally may have a condition known as Diabetes Mellitus or ‘Sugar Diabetes’.

Symptoms can include:

- Frequent thirst
- Weight loss
- The need to pass urine frequently
- Frequent infections.

This is a condition that is treatable, and those affected can lead relatively normal lives.

During Pregnancy
It is not uncommon for glucose to be found in the urine during pregnancy. This may be a result of the normal changes during pregnancy, or a condition known as Gestational Diabetes. This test will help distinguish between the two.
Patient Information

How is the test arranged?
University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust offers a GTT blood testing service at two of its hospital sites.

- Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital 024 7684 4116
- Rugby St Cross Hospital 01788 663509

All GTT blood tests are booked by the medical practitioner in charge of your care in consultation with yourself. It is requested that you do not arrive more than 20 minutes before your appointment. If you cannot attend your appointment, please notify the appropriate Phlebotomy Department at your earliest convenience. If you miss your appointment you will need to contact your medical practitioner to arrange another time for your test.

Getting ready for a Glucose Tolerance Test (GTT)

- You should eat a diet containing plenty of carbohydrate for the 3-5 days before the test. Foods such as potatoes, bread, pasta and fruit all contain carbohydrate.
- During the 12 hours before the test is due to start, it is important that you do not eat anything, or drink anything other than plain water.
- It is a good idea to bring a book or newspaper, as you will be asked to stay in the department for the 2 hours it takes to complete the test.

What should I do when I arrive at the Phlebotomy Department?
As your appointment has already been booked, you will not need to obtain a ticket. Please go directly to the Phlebotomy Department and make yourself known to a member of staff.

What happens during the test?

- The phlebotomist will collect a small sample of blood from your finger and measure the glucose level using a special meter.

For a small number of patients the level of glucose in this blood sample will mean that we do not need to carry on and do the whole test. We only need to take a sample of blood from your arm, and you will be able to go.

For most patients we will carry on with the test.
Patient Information

- A sample of blood will be taken from your arm by a trained member of staff, usually a phlebotomist. A separate information leaflet is available on having a blood test.

- You will then be given a glucose drink. It is important that you drink all of this in no more than 5 minutes.

- You will be asked to remain in the department for the next 2 hours

During the 2 hour period:
- You should stay sitting as much as possible.
- You must not eat or smoke as both of these actions affect the results.
- If you feel thirsty you should ask the staff for a drink of water.

Two hours after your glucose drink a further blood sample will be taken from your arm. This completes the test and you will be able to go.

If you feel unwell at any time during the test, please tell the staff so that they can assist you.

How will I feel after the test?
- After the test you may feel faint or dizzy. This is almost always helped by having something to eat.
- We strongly recommend that you get something to eat before leaving the hospital, especially if you intend to drive. Either visit the hospital canteen or bring a snack with you to eat after the second blood sample has been taken.
- In the unlikely event that you suffer any swelling, or excessive bruising at the place where the blood sample was collected, please contact your GP

When will I get the results?
Results will be available from your medical practitioner within 48 hours. We do not give results directly to patients, as it is usually necessary for your medical practitioner to interpret the significance in relation to your consultation with them.

Additional Information
If you have any questions about the phlebotomy or GTT procedure, please ask the member of staff taking the samples or your medical practitioner.

If you have any further queries regarding diabetes in general, please discuss them with your medical practitioner or telephone the diabetic nurses on 024 7696 6006
Patient Information

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact the Pathology Department on 024 7696 5427 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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