

## Procedures/Diagnostic Tests

### ***Adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) stimulation test***

*You are scheduled for an adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) stimulation test. During the test, a synthetic form of this naturally occurring hormone will be given to you. Blood samples will then be collected to measure how your adrenal glands are working.*

#### **Preparation**

There is usually no preparation for this test. You will be told if you are not to eat or drink, or if you are to stop taking any medications before the test.

#### **Procedure**

You may be asked to arrive 1 hour before the test starts so that a heparin lock can be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand. (The heparin lock will allow blood samples to be taken without repeated needle sticks.) ACTH will also be given through the heparin lock.

After the hormone is given, it will travel through the bloodstream and cause the adrenal glands to secrete cortisol and other hormones. At intervals during the test, blood samples will be taken to measure these hormones.

Patients usually feel no side effects or other sensations from this test. The procedure lasts about 1 hour.

#### **After the procedure**

After the last blood sample is taken, and if no other blood tests are needed, the heparin lock may be removed. You may then resume your usual activities.

If you have questions about this test, please ask. Your nurse and doctor are ready to assist you at all times.

#### **Special Instructions**

This information is prepared specifically for persons taking part in clinical research at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and may not apply to patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your health care team.

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