

Procedures/Diagnostic Tests

Clonidine stimulation test

You are scheduled to have a clonidine stimulation test. Clonidine is a medicine that causes the pituitary gland to secrete growth hormone. After taking the medicine, blood samples will be collected to measure how well your pituitary gland is working.

Preparation

The night before the test, do not eat, chew gum, or drink anything except water after midnight on the day of the test. You will be told if you are to stop taking any medications before the test.

Procedure

Before the test, a heparin lock will be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand. (The heparin lock will allow blood samples to be taken without repeated needle sticks.)

At the beginning of the test, you will be asked to swallow a tablet containing clonidine. Clonidine will be absorbed from your stomach and travel through the bloodstream to the brain. Once in the brain, it will cause the pituitary gland to secrete growth hormone. At intervals during the test, blood samples will be taken to measure growth hormone.

The test lasts about 2 hours.

After the last blood sample, and if no other blood tests are needed, the heparin lock may be removed. You may have a snack.

After the procedure

Stay in bed until you are no longer drowsy and your blood pressure has returned to normal. Your nurse will monitor your blood pressure and let you know when it is normal. This may take as long as an hour. You may then resume your usual activities.

If you have questions about the 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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National Institutes of Health Clinical Center
Bethesda, MD 20892

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