

Procedures/Diagnostic Tests

Corticotropin releasing hormone (CRH) stimulation test

You are scheduled to have a corticotropin releasing hormone (CRH) stimulation test. During the test, a synthetic form of this naturally occurring hormone will be given to you. Blood samples will be collected to measure how your pituitary gland and adrenal glands are working.

Preparation

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

The synthetic form of the hormone that NIH uses has not yet been approved by the Food and Drug Administration. You will be asked to sign a consent form before the test starts.

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.) CRH will also be administered through the heparin lock.

After the CRH is given, it will travel through the bloodstream and cause the pituitary gland to secrete another hormone, adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH). ACTH, in turn, will cause the adrenal glands to secrete cortisol and other hormones. At intervals during the test, blood samples will be taken to measure these hormones.

After CRH is given, you may feel a sensation of warmth that can last for up to 30 minutes. You may also have a metallic taste in your mouth that lasts for some time, and then goes away. There are no delayed or long-lasting side effects.

The test will last either 1 or 3 hours.

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 eat and 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.

Products/resources named serve as examples and do not imply endorsement by NIH. The fact that a certain product/resource is not named does not imply that such product/resource is unsatisfactory.

National Institutes of Health Clinical Center
Bethesda, MD 20892
1999

Questions about the Clinical Center?
<http://www.cc.nih.gov/comments.shtml>

