

# Growth Hormone Stimulation Test: What to Expect

Your child is scheduled to have a growth hormone stimulation test. This handout can help you learn how to prepare for the test and learn what to expect on the day of the test.

## WHAT IS A GROWTH HORMONE STIMULATION TEST?

A **growth hormone (GH) stimulation test** checks if your child's body is making enough growth hormone. **Growth hormone** helps children grow taller. Growth hormone also affects **metabolism** (how the body uses and stores fat).

## HOW LONG DOES A GH TEST LAST?

A GH test lasts between 2 ½ and 5 hours. Your child will go home after the test. He/she does not need to stay overnight in the hospital.

## WHEN WILL I GET THE RESULTS?

Your child's doctor will call you with the results within 7 days after the test.

## WHAT IF MY CHILD IS SICK?

We cannot do the GH test if your child is sick. If your child is sick 1-2 days before the test, please call the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at 617-726-7424 to reschedule.

**Your child's GH test is scheduled for**

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**The test will be in the following location:**

**Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)  
MassGeneral Hospital for Children  
55 Fruit St.  
Bigelow building, 6<sup>th</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02114**

**PICU phone: 617-724-4350**

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT FOR THE GH TEST?

### Before the test

- Unless you are told otherwise, your child should **fast (not eat or drink) before the GH test**. Water is the only thing your child can have after a certain time.
- If your child is age 3 or younger, he/she should **stop eating and drinking at 6:30 a.m. on the day of the test**.
- If your child is 4 or older, he/she should **stop eating and drinking at 12 a.m. (midnight) the night before the test**.
- Have your child wear **short sleeves or loose-fitting sleeves that can be rolled up**.
- Bring things from home that can help your child feel more comfortable during the test. This can be a blanket, music, a movie or a favorite toy.
- Ask your child's endocrinologist (**hormone doctor**) which medications he/she will use **during the test**. The endocrinologist can tell you about possible side effects and how long the test will take, depending on the medications your child receives.

### After the test

- Your child will feel sleepy for a few hours **after the test**. This is normal. Your child can go back to normal activities when he/she feels ready.
- Your child's endocrinologist will talk with you about follow-up appointments, if needed.

## Medications for the GH test

Every child gets different medications based on his medical needs. Talk with your child's endocrinologist about the medications your child will receive and the possible side effects.

Here is a list of medications used most often in GH testing:

### Through the IV

- **Arginine.** Side effects include low blood sugar, feeling warm or red, headache, nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting. In very rare cases, arginine can leak out of the IV and cause skin damage.

### As a pill

- **Clonidine.** Side effects include feeling sleepy and low blood pressure.
- **L-dopa/Carbidopa.** Side effects include nausea or vomiting.
- **Propranolol.** Side effects include low blood pressure.

### As an injection

- **Glucagon.** This makes your child's blood sugar levels go up and down. Side effects include nausea, vomiting or sweating.

**If your child is sick, you need to cancel and reschedule the test. Please call the PICU at 617-724-4350.**

**If your child is not sick, but you need to reschedule the test, please call the Pediatric Endocrinology nurse line at 617-726-7424.**

*Rev. 6/2017. MassGeneral Hospital for Children and Massachusetts General Hospital do not endorse any of the brands listed on this handout. This handout is intended to provide health information so that you can be better informed. It is not a substitute for medical advice and should not be used to treatment of any medical conditions.*

## Pediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes Center

Mass General Hospital for Children  
55 Fruit Street, Suite 6C  
Boston, MA 02114

[www.massgeneralforchildren.org/endocrine](http://www.massgeneralforchildren.org/endocrine)

For more information please call

**617-726-2909**