



**Bon Secours  
Pathology Department  
Sweat Testing Information Leaflet**

Your child has been referred to us for a sweat test. This leaflet explains what is involved and what to expect when you arrive.

**Where will the test be performed?**

- If your child is an inpatient the test will be performed in the Children's Ward. If you are attending as an outpatient the test will be performed in the Pathology Department.
- The Pathology Department is located at the rear of the building. If you are attending as an outpatient you will need to bring your doctor's referral letter and a signed consent form to indicate that you have had the procedure explained to you by your doctor.
- You must have an appointment and 24 hours notice is required for cancellations. Your child can continue to take any prescribed medications as usual on the day of the test. Please bring some warm clothing with you as this may help your child to sweat.

**What is a sweat test?**

A sweat test measures the amount of salt in sweat.

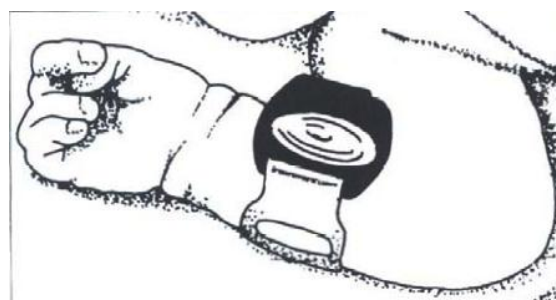
**Why is it performed?**

The test may be carried out on children or adults who are having recurrent chest infections, unexplained pale stools or diarrhoea, or who are not gaining weight or growing properly. A positive result may mean that your child may have cystic fibrosis (CF) but the final diagnosis will take into account other symptoms, clinical findings and other test results. A normal result will be helpful in ruling out CF while children and adults with CF have an increased amount of salt in their sweat.

**How is the sweat test carried out?**

A small area of skin, usually on the arm or leg, is cleaned with water and a special pad applied which contains a solution to stimulate sweating. A small electrical current from a battery box is then applied for about 5 minutes to stimulate the sweating process.

The pads are removed and sweat is collected for about 45 minutes from the stimulated area of skin into a plastic coil:



During this time your child will be free to read, play or eat, although any salty foods such as crisps should be avoided to minimise the risk of contamination. There are no needles involved; all your child feels is a mild tickling sensation if anything at all. The area that is stimulated may stay red for a few hours after the test but this is perfectly normal. Your child will need to stay still and should be encouraged not to touch the discs. You will be able to stay with your child throughout the test.

The area where the gel pads have been is cleaned again with sterile water, dried and a collecting duct is applied to the skin. This is a small watch-like disc, which contains a coiled tube and a small amount of blue dye so we can see at a glance how much sweat is being collected. This is left in position for 30 to 45 minutes. You will be able to go and have a coffee during this time and return when the disc is to be removed.

Once the collecting ducts are removed they are sent to the laboratory for analysis. The salt (chloride) within the sweat is measured and the result will be made available to your doctor within 24-48 hours. If there is not enough sweat to give a result then the test will be repeated as soon as possible. Occasionally we do not get a conclusive result, and then the test will also need to be repeated.

The doctor who organised the original sweat test will discuss the results with you. Please do not hesitate to ask questions at any time regarding the test.

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