

Information for Parents About Your Child's Sweat Chloride Test

The Newborn Screening Program has identified the need for Primary Children's Medical Center Laboratory (PCMC) to perform a sweat chloride test. This test is used to assist in the diagnosis of Cystic Fibrosis (CF). Most patients with CF have high concentrations of chloride in their sweat. Sweat tests are very different from most laboratory tests, so this information is to help you understand a little more about this procedure. PCMC Lab performs the sweat test according to the procedure approved by the National CF Foundation. This procedure requires collection of sweat from two different sites (usually the right and left arms or legs). We will make every effort to make your child as comfortable as possible during the procedure.

The test is started by stimulating the sweat glands on your child's arm or leg using a small electrical current and a chemical called pilocarpine. Some people feel a tingling during this part of the test, but other people don't feel anything. The skin may feel warm, which may cause some slight discomfort, but should not hurt at anytime. Some reddening of the skin at the site may occur, but the reddening should subside within a few hours. If your child is allergic to pilocarpine, a rash, a blister or itchy sensation where the pilocarpine entered your skin may develop. This reaction should also diminish within a few hours. If any adverse reaction does persist, contact your child's physician.

After stimulating the sweat glands, the test is continued by collecting sweat on a piece of gauze. The site is cleaned and the gauze is then secured in place where it must remain for 30 minutes to soak in the sweat. This should not cause any discomfort to your child. After the 30 minutes have elapsed, the gauze is removed and sent to the laboratory to be weighed. During the weighing of the sweat, we will ask you to wait for approximately 10 minutes make sure we have collected an adequate amount of sweat. If we have collected an adequate amount, you are free to leave. If we have collected an insufficient sample, you have the option of retesting. You may retest two times the same day only. Your provider will be notified of the results and will contact you.

Please allow 45-90 minutes for your child's appointment. Make sure your child is well fed and bring extra clothes for bundling. Arrive early to the outpatient lab located on the south entrance of the hospital. Valet parking is available. Your child has been pre-registered for this test.

Contact us if you have any questions at 801-584-8256.