
What is a sweat chloride test?

It is a test to see if your child has cystic fibrosis (CF). The test measures how much salt (chloride) is in your child's sweat.

What is cystic fibrosis (CF)?

CF is a disease that causes the body to make very thick mucus. The thick mucus:

- Affects the lungs, intestines (colon) and sweat glands.
- Can cause problems with breathing and digesting food.

CF is inherited. This means the disease is passed from parents to child.

What happens before the test?

Have your child drink 8 cups of water the day before the test so they are well-hydrated.

What happens during the test?

For the test, a member of your child's care team will:

- Clean your child's skin with alcohol and water and then dry the skin.
- Put 2 electrodes on your child's skin. The electrodes are small, flat discs with wires that are part of a machine.
- Run a very small electric current through the electrodes for 5 minutes.
- Take off the electrodes.
- Clean your child's skin with water and then dry the skin.
- Put a sweat collector on your child's skin. Your child's sweat is collected for 30 minutes.
- Take off the collector and test your child's sweat.

Sometimes, not enough sweat is collected. If this happens, your child will need the test again.

Does the test hurt?

The test should not hurt. Some children do feel a slight tingling or tickling from the electric current.

What else can I expect?

Your child may:

- Have redness around the skin where the electrodes were. It may look sunburned. This is normal and will go away.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Sweat chloride test, continued

- Have an allergic reaction. We will stop the test and call the doctor if your child's skin gets inflamed or swells.
- Have burns. These can be small or large. We will stop the test and call the doctor if a burn happens.

When and where does my child get the test?

Your child's doctor needs to order the test before we can do it.

- Your doctor can fax the order to our lab.
- Or, you can bring the order with you on the day of the test.

Call 404-785-6014 to schedule a test. The tests are done from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Monday through Friday at:

Children's at Egleston
1405 Clifton Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30322

Children's at Scottish Rite
1001 Johnson Ferry Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30342

All tests for children ages 3 months and younger are done at Children's at Scottish Rite.

If your child's test is positive, the doctor may order more testing or repeat the test later.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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