

# Sweat test

## Patient information sheet

The respiratory physiology department performs various tests which help in the diagnosis and management of patients with breathing problems.

### What is a sweat test?

Your doctor has requested a sweat test. This measures the amount of salt (chloride) in your sweat.

### What does the test involve?

Your test will be carried out by a clinical physiologist, healthcare scientist or clinical scientist.

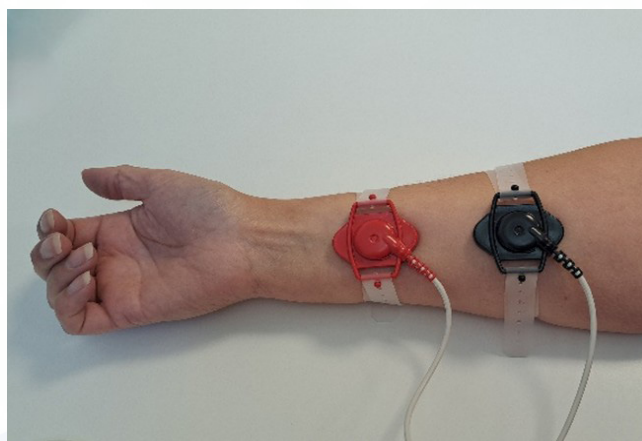
Firstly, your forearm will be cleaned with sterile water, then two small gel pads will be placed on the inside of your forearm using electrodes. These are held in place with straps (picture 1). The gel pads contain a substance which stimulates your sweat glands.

The electrodes are connected to a device (picture 2) which provides a small electric current that is passed through the gel pads, to further stimulate sweat production. This is not painful; however, you may feel a tingling sensation. This part of the test will take 5 minutes and then the gel discs are removed.

There will be a red mark where the gel disc has stimulated the skin. This is normal and will fade within a few hours. Your skin will then be gently cleaned with sterile water again.

Then a small collection disc is placed over the stimulated area to collect the sweat. This is secured tightly in place with a strap (picture 3). The collection disc contains a coiled tube and a small amount of blue dye to help visualise the sweat.

Once the sweat has started to collect, a timer will be set for 30 minutes. After this time the coiled tubing is removed from the collection disc and placed in a container and sent to the biochemistry laboratory for analysis.



**Picture 1: Position of electrode on forearm**



**Picture 2: The sweat test equipment**

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**Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**  
Papworth Road, Cambridge  
Biomedical Campus,  
Cambridge CB2 0AY  
Tel: 01223 638000  
[www.royalpapworth.nhs.uk](http://www.royalpapworth.nhs.uk)

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**Picture 3: Position of the collection disc on forearm**

### Preparing for your appointment

Do not apply any creams or lotions onto your arms for 24 hours before the test.

You can eat, drink and exercise as normal before the test.

You can continue taking your regular medications.

### Risks

There is a very remote risk of minor skin burns and a small risk of sensitivity to the substance in the gel pads which can cause reddening of the skin where the gel pad is placed. This will usually disappear after a few hours.

### Further information

If you have any questions about the test or the department, please do not hesitate to telephone respiratory physiology on 01223 638207.

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