

## HOW WILL THE TEST FEEL?

Although the test is not painful, some people describe a tingling sensation at the site of the electrode. In smaller children or infants, the sensation may cause irritability or discomfort.

## SWEAT TESTING POSES A REMOTE RISK OF MINOR SKIN BURNS (1:50,000)

There is an element of risk in all medical procedures, no matter how simple. The sweat test has been an important laboratory tool since the 1950s. In extremely rare cases blistering of the skin may occur. In most of the incidents reported, the children have shown no signs of pain or discomfort during the procedure.

## RESULTS

After the sweat is collected the laboratory technologist will complete the analysis. The test results will be sent to your family physician. Laboratory employees are not allowed to release test results to the patient over the phone. Normally, your physician will have the results back from the laboratory within a couple of days.

## REPEAT TESTING

A minimum amount of sweat is needed for accurate test results. In a small number of cases, the amount of sweat collected is not enough. When this happens, your family physician will be notified and the test will need to be repeated.

**Take an active role in your health care and safety!**

**Listen to EVERYTHING** your health care provider tells you and **make sure** they explain the procedure in a way that you understand.

---

Your Appointment:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

---

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

**Laboratory Medicine**  
Queen Elizabeth Hospital

# Provincial Laboratory Services

# Sweat Chloride Test

*A guide for parents  
& caregiver*

**Health PEI**  
One Island Health System

## SWEAT CHLORIDE TEST

### WHY IS IT DONE?

A sweat test measures the amount of salt (sodium and chloride) in sweat. This test is helpful in investigating children or adults who are having:

- Recurrent chest infections
- Frequent and unexplained pale bowel movements and/or
- Problems gaining weight or growing properly

A sweat test is part of a series of tests used to help exclude a diagnosis of Cystic Fibrosis. Normally sweat on the skin surface contains very little sodium and chloride. People with cystic fibrosis have 2 to 5 times the amount of sodium and chloride in their sweat.

### WHERE IS THE SWEAT TEST DONE?

The sweat chloride test is performed in the laboratory at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Your family physician or pediatrician will call the laboratory to schedule an appointment for the procedure.

### WHEN IS THE TEST PERFORMED?

The test is performed on the first and third Wednesday of each month. This helps the laboratory to ensure that the specially trained staff members are present to perform this procedure.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING WITH ME?

Please bring the completed laboratory requisition and your child's Provincial Health Card with you on the day of the test.

### WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE QEH

Please arrive at least 30 minutes before your appointment. Go directly to Admitting / Registration in the front lobby to register before coming up to the laboratory.

### PREPARATION

No special preparation is necessary. Your child may eat, drink and exercise as usual, and continue to take any current medications before having this test.

A sweat test usually takes about an hour. You may want to bring books or toys to help your child pass the time. You may stay with your child during the entire procedure, and you may be asked to assist by holding your child during the stimulation portion of the test.

### WHAT HAPPENS DURING A SWEAT TEST?

The Sweat Test consists of three procedures:

1. Sweat stimulation
2. Sweat collection
3. Sweat analysis

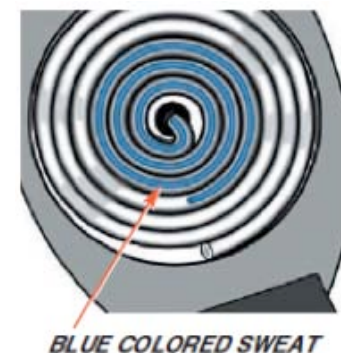


In the first part of the test, a pair of electrodes will be placed on the patient's arm.

Gel discs containing pilocarpine, a sweat inducing drug, are placed between the electrodes and the skin surface. A very low level of electric current is applied for 5 minutes. The current causes the pilocarpine to diffuse into the skin in that local area, causing the sweat glands to produce more sweat for a period of time.



In the second part of the test, a plastic sweat collector will be placed on the patient's arm. This is left in place for 30 minutes.



There is a blue dye in the sweat collector that will color the sweat and allow the lab to see if sweat is being produced.