

Patient information

Author: Pathology

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This information can be provided in a different language or format (e.g. large print, Braille or audio version) on request.

This is a smokefree Trust. Smoking is not allowed in any of our hospital buildings or grounds.

The Trust will not tolerate aggression, intimidation or violence.

Basildon University Hospital
Nethermayne
Basildon, Essex SS16 5NL
01268 524900

Minicom: 01268 593190

www.basildonandthurrock.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
01268 394440
Email: pals@btuh.nhs.uk

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Sweat test

The sweat test is carried out by appointment, on Tuesday mornings, in the children's outpatient department at Basildon hospital. It should take about an hour. No special preparation is required, but you may find it useful to bring a favourite toy or book for a young child.

The sweat test is performed so that the concentration of salt in the sweat can be measured. It is usually done for children who have recurrent chest infections, regular bouts of diarrhoea, or are not gaining adequate weight.

It is undertaken to exclude cystic fibrosis, a condition that may have these symptoms.

Occasionally for technical reasons (such as the sweat sample being too small) the test may have to be repeated. Should this be necessary, we will normally contact you within two working days.

We usually test the sweat sample within two days of collection. Your doctor should have the results early in the week following the test.

How is it done?

The procedure is not painful, although there may be a slight tingling sensation, or discomfort when the collector is attached.

Two moist gel pads are placed on the forearm; one contains a solution to stimulate sweating.

The solution is drawn into the sweat glands for five minutes, by a small electric current from a torch battery.

The skin is then washed, and the sweat is allowed to collect into a plastic tube for about thirty minutes.

You may leave the department during this time, returning after 30 minutes, so that the test can be finished by removing the sweat collector analysis.

The skin will look red; but this coloration will normally disappear by the next day. There is a very low risk of minor burns, but this has not happened at Basildon using our current technique (over 10 years).

How do I get the result?

The result will be sent to your doctor who will normally receive it a few days after the test. For reasons of confidentiality the Laboratory is not allowed to give the result to you.

An appointment will be booked by your specialist or if you have been given a request form you can make the booking yourself by telephoning the laboratory on 01702 435555 ext: 6612.

Please contact your doctor if you need any more information.