

DDAVP (desmopressin) response test

Information for patients



You have been given this leaflet as your doctor has recommended that you have a desmopressin (DDAVP) response test.

This leaflet explains what the test is, what is involved, and any risks or side effects.

What is DDAVP?

DDAVP is a synthetic hormone which produces a temporary rise in the amount of clotting factor in your bloodstream. This means it can be used as a treatment before any dental, minor surgery or invasive procedures, to help you to stop bleeding excessively.

DDAVP helps your body to release its own stores of von Willebrand factor and factor eight (clotting factor).

Von Willebrand factor is a protein which acts like a 'glue', to make platelets stick to the areas of a blood vessel that is damaged, for example, if you cut yourself. This helps the bleeding to stop.

If there is not enough von Willebrand factor in your blood, the platelets won't 'stick' properly. This means the bleeding will continue for longer.

Why have I been recommended this test?

The test will show if there is an increase in the clotting factor in your bloodstream after you have had the injection of DDAVP. Not everyone has the same response to DDAVP.

This test is carried out if:

- you have mild haemophilia
- you are a haemophilia carrier with a low factor level
- you have a certain form of von Willebrand's disease
- you have a certain form of platelet function defect.

Where will I have the test?

An appointment for your test will be arranged with you either in clinic or over the telephone. The test will be carried out in the Haemophilia and Thrombosis Centre, at the Churchill Hospital, Oxford.

What I need to do before the test?

You do not need to take any special precautions or prepare in any particular way before the test.

However, it is very important to tell the nurse or doctor if you are taking any other medications, have heart problems, high blood pressure or are pregnant.

In such instances, DDAVP may be used with caution. Your doctor or nurse will discuss the reasons for this with you.

What will the test involve?

A nurse will take a sample of your blood to check your factor levels before you are given DDAVP. The nurse will then record your blood pressure and pulse.

If your readings are at a good level, you will be given a quick injection of DDAVP under your skin in your upper arm. You may feel a slight stinging sensation as the medicine is injected.

A second blood sample will be taken after 90 minutes, and a third between 4 to 6 hours after the injection. This is to monitor the increase of factor levels in your bloodstream after the injection.

You will need to stay in the hospital for the first and second blood samples. You can then leave the hospital, but **must return** for the third sample. The nurse will tell you the time you need to come back. If you do not return to the hospital, the test results will be incomplete and you will need to rearrange the full test for another day.

The total time needed to complete the test is a minimum of 4 hours and a maximum of 6 hours.

Are there any side effects?

You may possibly experience side effects from DDAVP. These may be:

- a feeling of warmth around your face
- red cheeks
- nausea (feeling sick)
- headaches
- low blood pressure
- allergic skin reactions (this is rare).

We advise you to limit how much you drink on the day of the test. You should drink no more than **1 litre** of fluid during the **24 hours** after the injection.

This is because the DDAVP can cause your body to retain fluid, which can cause symptoms of:

- headache
- convulsions/seizures
- vomiting/nausea
- weight gain.

If you experience any of these symptoms during the test tell the nurse.

If you have already left the hospital, contact the team at the haemophilia centre on the numbers on page 7.

What do I need to do after the test?

If the DDAVP has a good effect on your factor levels, you will be given DDAVP before any future dental procedure or minor surgery.

You will be notified of your results either by a telephone call the next day or in a letter posted to you. A copy of your results will be stored in your medical notes.

Further advice

If you have any worries or questions, please contact the Haemophilia and Thrombosis Centre at the Churchill Hospital and ask to speak to the haemophilia nurse or doctor:

Tel: **01865 225 316**

(9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)

Tel: **01865 741 166**

(After 5.00pm and at weekends) – ask for the 'on-call' specialist registrar in haematology.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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