

Local anaesthetic testing

The aim of this information sheet is to help answer some of the questions you may have about having a local anaesthetic test. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives to the procedure, as well as what you can expect when you come to hospital.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a doctor, dentist or nurse caring for you.

What is local anaesthetic testing?

Your doctor or dentist has referred you to the Department of Oral Medicine for local anaesthetic testing because they suspect you may have had an allergic reaction to local anaesthetic. This test involves exposing you to different types of local anaesthetic to see if you have a reaction, enabling us to identify any that you are allergic to.

What are the benefits? Why should I have local anaesthetic testing?

This procedure is done to confirm whether or not you are allergic to particular local anaesthetics. This will help you to avoid allergic reactions in the future and to find at least one local anaesthetic that you can tolerate. This can then be used in future when you need a local anaesthetic for dental treatment.

What are the risks?

There is a risk that you might have a minor local reaction, but the tests are designed to minimise this. If however, you develop a rash or swelling you will be given the necessary treatment immediately to reduce any symptoms. You will not be sent home until your symptoms have improved.

You may feel drowsy or tired the day after the tests, as some people experience this side effect after local anaesthetics

Are there any alternatives?

Local anaesthetic testing is the only way to investigate whether you are allergic to any local anaesthetics.

How can I prepare for local anaesthetic testing?

We would advise you to attend your test with a responsible adult, particularly if you have had a previous bad reaction to local anaesthetics. We would prefer that you bring someone with you to keep you company all afternoon while the tests are being done, and to accompany you home in case you feel drowsy. Most people do not feel drowsy on the way home.

You may wish to set aside the whole day for the procedure.

Asking for your consent

We want to involve you in all the decisions about your care and treatment. If there is anything you don't understand or you need more time to think about it, please tell the staff caring for you.

Remember, it is your decision. You can change your mind at any time. Let staff know immediately if you change your mind. Your wishes will be respected at all times.

What happens during the local anaesthetic testing?

Local anaesthetic testing takes place at Guy's Hospital. It involves three stages. Stage one is scratching your forearm with a needle carrying a range of local anaesthetic agents. Stage two is injecting a small amount of the agent under your skin. Stage three is injecting a small amount of local anaesthetic into your cheek from the inside of your mouth.

At each stage you will then be observed for 15-30 minutes after a substance is tested, to see if you show any adverse reactions. After giving a negative skin test at stage two, it is usual to have at least one local anaesthetic agent that we can test at stage three. It is very rare for patients to show positive reactions to all of the local anaesthetics tested at stage two.

Will I feel any pain?

You may feel a little discomfort when the local anaesthetic is injected under your skin or into your cheek.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be observed to see if you show any adverse reactions. You will be able to go home 45-60 minutes after your last injection.

What do I need to do after I go home?

After the procedure you will be able to return home or go back to work as normal, unless you have shown any adverse reactions as a result of the test. If you have a rash then you will not be allowed to go home until it starts to go away.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

You will not normally need a follow-up appointment at Guy's Hospital unless you were referred from a department there. Your next appointment will most likely be with your own dentist.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any questions or concerns about local anaesthetic testing, please contact the Department of Oral Medicine on 020 7188 4399, Monday-Friday 9am-5pm.

Contact us

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

e: 020 7188 8801 **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

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t: 111

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w: www.nhs.uk

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t: 0848 143 4017 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk