Pediatric Cortisol (ACTH) Stimulation Test: Low Dose

An **ACTH stimulation test** checks if your child's adrenal glands make enough cortisol. The adrenal glands sit on top of each kidney. Cortisol is a hormone that helps:

- Blood pressure from getting too low
- Blood sugar from getting too low
- The body's response to stress, illness, and injury

Before the Test

Your child may need to fast before the test. Ask your clinic if fasting is needed.

- **Children who weigh 40 pounds or less:** do not eat or drink for 4 hours before the test
- **Children who weigh more than 40 pounds:** do not eat or drink for 8 hours before the test

If your child needs to take steroid medicine within 2 weeks before the test, call the clinic. The test may need to be rescheduled.

During the Test

You can stay with your child during the test. Plan to be at the American Family Children's Hospital Day Treatment Clinic for 2-3 hours. During the test:

1. A nurse will place an IV in your child's arm.
2. The care team will use the IV to give medicine and draw blood samples.
3. Your child will receive a medicine called cosyntropin through the IV.
4. Cosyntropin helps the body make cortisol.
5. Blood samples will be drawn at set times after the medicine is given.
6. A nurse will monitor your child during the test.
7. The IV will be removed when the test is done.

Side Effects

Cosyntropin does not usually cause side effects. There is a rare risk of an allergic reaction.

Activity Restrictions

Your child can return to normal activities after the test.

Insurance

Your insurance may need to approve this test before it can be scheduled. Ask the clinic if you need to call your insurance company. If you are asked to call your insurance company, use

- **CPT Code**: 80428 (outpatient test)

If UW Health is out of network, make sure future outpatient visits are also approved. You may need these CPT codes:

- 99205
- 99203
- 99243

If your insurance says approval is needed:

1. Ask them to fax the required forms to **(608) 833-3232**.
2. Let our clinic know your insurance's contact information.

After you call your insurance, let us know if approval is needed. After approval is received, or not needed, we can schedule the test.

When to Call

If you have questions, please contact your provider through MyChart or call your provider listed in your After Visit Summary or After Hospital Care Plan. For a list of UW Health Clinics, visit www.uwhealth.org/.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 7/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF# 8532