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FACT SHEET AND PATIENT INFORMATION HYDROGEN (H₂)-BREATH TEST

How the test is done - Your breath will be tested for the presence of hydrogen. You will be asked to blow into a machine. Normally, very little hydrogen is detected in the breath. You will then be given a pleasant tasting solution to drink. Breath samples are collected every 15-30 minutes for up to 3 hours to detect any increase in hydrogen in the breath as the solution is digested. Increased hydrogen breath levels can indicate improper digestion or small bowel bacterial overgrowth (SBBO/SIBO).

How do I prepare for the test - The hydrogen breath test cannot be done following a colonoscopy, barium enema, or any tests that require a bowel prep to be given. The bowel prep will cleanse the bacteria. You must ideally wait 4 weeks to have a breath test done to allow the bacteria to re-establish.

4 weeks before the test - DO NOT take any antibiotics. Do NOT undergo colonoscopy, barium enema, or other tests that require a bowel prep or cleansing.

24 hours before the test -DO NOT smoke the day before and the day of the test. Smoking can affect the results of the test. Second-hand smoke can also affect the results of the test.

RESTRICT Milk and Dairy Products. Lactose-free milk, soy milk, and rice milk are ok.

RESTRICT Canned Fruit and Honey.

RESTRICT Fruit Juice, Soft Drinks, Sports Drinks and Alcohol.

RESTRICT High Fibre Foods (eg. beans & legumes, bran, oats)

NO Fibre Supplements (eg. Metamucil®).

NO Laxatives.

8 hours before the test - DO NOT eat or drink anything (minimal sips of water ok) for at least 8 hours before the test.

Day of the test - NO Smoking and Continue to Fast. Brush your teeth thoroughly with water ONLY (no toothpaste). Continue to take your normal medication with plain water. Refrain from physical exercise for 1 hour before your test.

You may wish to bring reading material, laptop, i-pod, etc. to occupy your time. DO NOT smoke. Avoid second-hand smoke. DO NOT chew gum. DO NOT use mouthwash.

The testing procedure can last for up to 3 hours.

Final test results will be sent to your GP. I am happy to discuss results with you in clinic.

After the test - You may resume your normal activities.

You may resume your normal diet unless you have other tests that require dietary restrictions.