

Willesden Community Diagnostic Centre

Point-of-care testing (POCT)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

What is a POCT eosinophil count measurement?

A **point-of-care testing (POCT) eosinophil count** is a simple test used to measure the number of eosinophils in your child's blood. Eosinophils are a type of white blood cell involved in inflammation and allergic responses. This test helps doctors assess whether your child has **eosinophilic asthma** (caused by high levels of eosinophils in their airways) or other allergic conditions.

Why is this test important?

This test helps doctors:

- identify **eosinophilic asthma**, which might respond better to certain treatments.
- determine the level of **airway inflammation** in children with asthma.
- decide on the best treatment, including whether they need **inhaled corticosteroids** or other medications.
- Monitor how well their treatment is working over time.

How is the test performed?

The test involves taking a small sample of blood from your child's **finger**.

1. **Cleaning the finger:** we will clean their fingertip with an alcohol swab.
2. **Using a small lancet:** we'll use a sterile lancet (tiny needle) to a quick prick on the finger.
3. **Collecting the blood:** we'll collect a small drop of blood using a small tube (capillary tube).
4. **Processing the sample:** we put the blood in a point-of-care analyser, which gives us the results in **5 to 10 minutes**.

This test is **quick, safe, and minimally invasive**.

Will it hurt?

Your child may feel a small **pinch** when the lancet pricks their finger, but it is very quick. We can give them a small plaster or gauze pad after the test if they need one.

How should my child prepare for the test?

Your child doesn't need to do any special preparation.

Please make sure your child is **well-hydrated**, as this can make collecting their blood easier.

If your child has any concerns or fear of needles, tell us know so we can help keep them comfortable.

What do the results mean?

- an eosinophil count of **more than or equal to 500 cells/ μ L** is a high eosinophil count, which suggests they have eosinophilic asthma or an allergic condition. Your child's doctor might talk to you about starting or adjusting treatment.
- an eosinophil count of **300 to 499 cells/ μ L** is the intermediate range. We might need to do more tests and assessments.
- an eosinophil count of **<300 cells/ μ L** is a low eosinophil count, which makes eosinophilic asthma less likely. We'll consider other causes for your child's symptoms.

What happens after the test?

We'll explain the results to you. If necessary, your doctor may adjust or start **asthma treatment**.

We'll record the results in your child's medical notes and share them with the referring doctor.

Are there any risks?

This test is very safe. The risks are minimal but can include:

- a small **pinprick sensation** at the testing site.
- **minor bleeding** (which stops quickly with gentle pressure).
- **temporary soreness or bruising**, which is rare.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

1. How long does the test take?

The entire process takes around **5 to 10 minutes**, and we'll have the results immediately.

2. Can my child eat and drink before the test?

Yes, there are no dietary restrictions for this test.

3. Will my child need any follow-up tests?

If your child's eosinophil count is high, your doctor might order additional tests or talk to you about starting treatment.


4. Does my child need this test every time they visit?

Not necessarily. We might repeat it if their symptoms change or if we need to check how their treatment is working.

More information

If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider or contact:

 **Willesden Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC)**

 **Phone:** 020 370 46578

 **Email:** Imperial.CDCLungFunctionLab@nhs.net

 **Website:** <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations/willesden-community-diagnostic-centre>

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:

imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

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