

## Saliva Cortisol Test – Collection Guidelines

A saliva cortisol test is done to measure the level of cortisol, a hormone in saliva. Cortisol is made by the adrenal gland and has many functions. It helps the body use sugar (glucose) and fat for energy (metabolism). It also helps the body manage stress. Cortisol levels can be affected by many conditions, such as physical or emotional stress, strenuous activity, infection or injury.

### You will need

- Salivette collection device kit
- Permanent marking pen

### Before the collection

- Recommended collection time is usually between 11 PM and 1 AM. Your healthcare provider may also need different or additional collection times.
- Do not let your child eat for 60 minutes before you collect saliva.
- Do not let your child have any alcohol less than 12 hours before collecting saliva.
- Do not let your child brush teeth just before collecting saliva.
- Have your child rinse his or her mouth thoroughly with water 10 minutes before collecting saliva.
- You may be asked to recollect the saliva if the pH value(s) is greater than 9.0 or less than 3.5.
- Saliva in which you can see blood, cellular debris, food bits, or mucus cannot be used. If the saliva is not clear, you will need to collect another specimen.



**Picture 1** Parts of the Salivette collection device

## Specimen collection

1. Write the child's full legal name, date of birth, and date and time of collection on the label in the kit. Attach it to the outside tube of the Salivette collection device (**Picture 1**, page 1).
2. Wash your hands with soap and water, rinse and dry well before starting the test.
3. Remove the stopper (A) of the container to expose the swab (B). Do not remove the insert (C) from the tube (D). This is needed to process the specimen.
4. Place swab (B) directly into the child's mouth by tipping the tube so the swab falls into the mouth. The swab should be under the tongue, or allowed to move freely across the tongue. Do not place the swab between cheek and gum. Gently chewing the swab is okay.
5. Please watch your child closely to be sure he or she does not choke on or swallow the swab.
6. Keep the swab in your child's mouth for two to three minutes. Be sure the swab is completely saturated with saliva. This will ensure that enough volume is collected (1/4 teaspoon is needed).
7. Return the swab by having your child carefully spit it back into the insert (C). Do not touch the swab with your fingers. Do not remove insert (C) from tube (D).
8. Replace the stopper (A); so that the cap is tight (the cap will click when inserted properly).

## Preparation instructions

- If more than one specimen is submitted, be sure that each tube is clearly labeled with the child's full legal name and date of birth, **and collection date and time**.
- Submit specimens in Salivette collection devices **only**. Do not return specimens in any other containers.

## Specimen storage and transport

- Store the specimen(s) in the refrigerator.
- Keep specimen(s) cold and take to the nearest Laboratory Service Center.

If you have any questions about the test and why your doctor ordered it, be sure to ask your child's doctor or nurse.

**For questions about saliva collection for this test or directions to the Laboratory Service Center nearest you, please call Laboratory Services at (800) 934-6575, or visit [NationwideChildrens.org/Lab](http://NationwideChildrens.org/Lab).**