

# 1-MG OVERNIGHT DEXAMETHASONE SUPPRESSION TEST (DST)

## Your doctor has recommended that you take the 1-mg overnight DST

### What happens next?<sup>1,2</sup>

**1** The first step is to take 1 mg of dexamethasone (DEX) at night (between 11:00 PM and midnight or as close as possible to this time). This may come as a single 1-mg tablet or two 0.5-mg tablets. You may take DEX with milk or an antacid. This can help prevent an upset stomach or heartburn.

**2** The second step is to have a sample of your blood drawn the next morning (between 7:00 and 9:00 AM) to measure your body's response to DEX.



### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What if my bedtime is earlier than 11:00 PM?

Take the medication between 11:00 PM and midnight or as close as possible to this time. Please let your doctor know in advance if you need to take the medication earlier in the evening. You may be asked to write down the time that you took the medication in order to accurately determine the results of the test. You should try to get to the lab as soon as it opens in the morning, ideally between 7:00 and 8:00 AM.

#### What if I get my blood test after 9:00 AM?

Let your doctor know that you were unable to have your blood tested in the morning. You may be asked to start the test over.

#### I forgot to take the medication last night. Should I still have my blood tested?

No, please have your blood drawn only if you took DEX the night before.

#### I only took a single 0.5-mg tablet of DEX. Should I still have my blood tested?

No, please call your doctor's office and let them know what happened. You may need to repeat the test on a different day.

### Talk to your doctor if you have any any additional questions or concerns about this test

Healthcare provider's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Healthcare provider's number: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



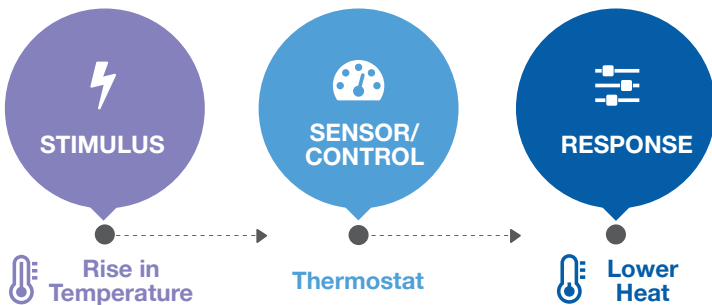
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## What else do you need to know about DST?

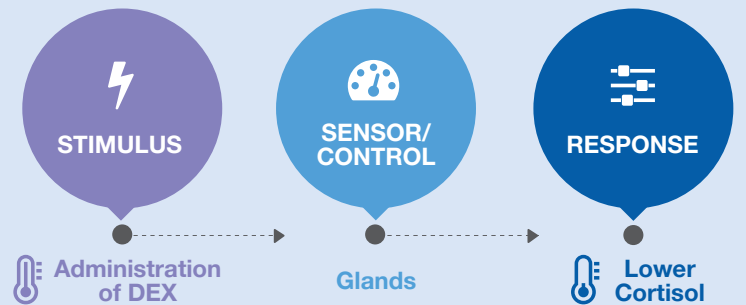
DST is a test that checks if your body is making too much cortisol—a natural hormone. The test uses “negative feedback” to see if your glands are working as they should be. If working normally, an increase in DEX—which is like cortisol—would “turn off” your glands from making cortisol.<sup>1,3</sup>

## How negative feedback works

The negative feedback system works much like a thermostat. If a thermostat is working right, then a rise in temperature should lower heat.



If the pituitary and adrenal glands are working right, then DEX should lower cortisol.<sup>2</sup>



## More about cortisol<sup>4,5</sup>

- Cortisol is made by the adrenal glands, which are located above each kidney
- Cortisol is controlled by the adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH) made in the pituitary gland. The pituitary gland—also called the master gland—is located just behind your nose at the base of your brain
- Cortisol helps the body respond to stress. It helps control vital functions such as blood sugar levels and blood pressure
- Too much cortisol production in the body could mean you have hypercortisolism and can potentially lead to health problems

## Getting ready for your test<sup>1,2</sup>

Some medicines can affect the results of the DST, please tell your healthcare provider about all the medications you are taking, including over-the-counter medications and supplements. You may be asked to stop some of these medications to do the test.

**Learn more about the signs and symptoms of hypercortisolism, its clinical consequences, and the importance of early detection.**



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**References:** 1. Fishbach FT. *A manual of laboratory and diagnostic tests*. 7th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2003. 2. Nieman LK, Biller BMK, Newell-Price J, et al. The diagnosis of Cushing's syndrome: an Endocrine Society Clinical Practice guideline. *J Clin Endocrinol Metab*. 2008;93(5):1526-1540. 3. Raff H, Sharma ST, Nieman LK. Physiological basis for the etiology, diagnosis, and treatment of adrenal disorders: Cushing's syndrome, adrenal insufficiency, and congenital adrenal hyperplasia. *Compr Physiol*. 2014;4(2):739-769. 4. Cortisol Test. Medline Plus: National Library of Medicine (US). <https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/cortisol-test/>. Updated April 2019. Accessed April 17, 2019. 5. Pituitary Disorders. Hormone Health Network From the Endocrine Society. <https://www.hormone.org/diseases-and-conditions/pituitary>. Published May 2013. Accessed April 17, 2019.