

Children's Respiratory Department

Cilia Brushing

The purpose of this leaflet is to inform you about the procedure called Cilia Brushing

What are Cilia?

Cilia are tiny hair-like projections from cells that line your respiratory tract and are responsible for moving mucus up to the throat, where it can be spat out or swallowed. Sometimes these cilia do not beat as fast as they should or beat in the wrong direction, which can explain why some people get repeated chest infections.

Why is my child having this test done?

Your doctor would like to have this test done to help them decide what is wrong with your child. Mainly it is to exclude a condition called Primary Cilia Dyskinesia. This is a rare condition, which effects the cilia movement and causes increased chest infections. The doctor would like to see how fast your child's cilia beat. If your child is found to have this condition your consultant will discuss with you the implications. This is the only defining test that can be done for this condition.

There is no preparation needed on your part prior to the procedure.

What is Cilia Brushing?

A small soft brush (like a tiny bottle brush) will be brushed inside of your child's nose to obtain a sample of cilia. The sample will be sent to the laboratory where it will be looked at under a microscope for the shape of the cilia and the direction and speed at which they beat. The procedure will only take a few minutes to complete. Afterward you and your child will be able to go home.

Where will this be done?

It will be done in the children's outpatients department at the Great North Children's Hospital

When will I get the results?

The sample has to be sent to another hospital to be looked at. You will be contacted as soon as we have the result it can take anywhere between six to 12 weeks to be confirmed. However, you are welcome to contact us after five weeks to see if we have received the results.

Are there any side effects?

This is not a particularly pleasant procedure, it may make your child's nose bleed and it can feel uncomfortable and quite sore at the time. Unfortunately, it cannot be performed under anaesthetic/sedation as this would affect the speed of the cilia beating.

We hope this information sheet has been helpful to you but is by no means a replacement for talking to either the doctor or nurse.

Contact Details

Nurse Specialists Children's Respiratory:
0191 282 5558, Monday to Friday, 9.00am –5.00pm or

The Physiotherapist for the Children's Respiratory Service
0191 282 1265, Monday to Friday, 9.00am –5.00pm

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can offer on-the-spot advice and information about the NHS. You can contact them on freephone 0800 032 02 02 or e-mail northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Useful websites

If you would like further information about health conditions and treatment options, you may wish to have a look at the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk. On this website there is an information prescription generator www.nhs.uk/ips which brings together a wealth of approved patient information from the NHS and charity partners which you may find helpful

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