

MACHADO JOSEPH DISEASE DOING A BLOOD TEST HELP SHEET



This Help Sheet talks about why and how MJD blood tests are done.

Why does blood need to be taken from me to find out if I have MJD?

If you have MJD in your family, a small amount of blood taken from you can be tested to see if you have Machado Joseph Disease. This helps you, your family and health staff to plan for good care in the future. People are usually tested only if they are showing some symptoms of MJD.

Do I have to pay for it?

No.

Where do I go to have the blood test?

Go to your Health Clinic.

Photo #1



Who takes the blood?

A nurse or trained health worker will take the blood.

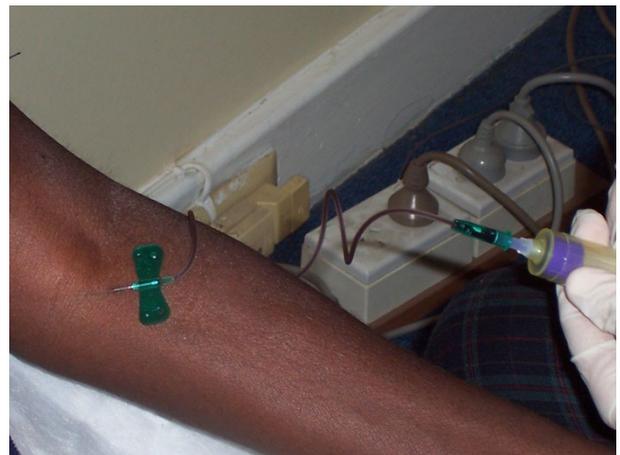
What do I wear?

Loose sleeves that can easily be pulled up so your arm is clear (see Photo #1 above).

What do they do?

A tight bandage called a tourniquet will be put around your upper arm so that your veins stand out (see Photo #1). This makes it easier to put the needle into the vein. A small needle is put into the vein. The blood is then drawn up from the vein, through the needle into the collecting tube (see Photo #2).

Photo #2



Where does my blood go afterwards?

The blood goes to a city pathology laboratory. A small amount of the blood is taken out of the tube and goes into a machine which looks for the genes which cause MJD.

Why do they wear gloves to take the blood?

Gloves are worn as a protection against infection for both you and the nurse.

How much blood is taken?

1 to 5 teaspoons (5 ml – 25ml) of blood may be taken and stored in a thin tube as shown in the photo (see Photo#3).

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Photo #3



Does it hurt?

When the needle goes into the skin it stings for a short time. It doesn't hurt when the blood is drawn up into the tube that is attached. When the needle is taken out it may sting a little bit. The nurse will put a cotton swab onto the skin where the needle has been, and may ask you to press on the spot so it doesn't bleed (see Photo #4).

Photo #4



What can the blood test tell us about MJD?

The blood can tell us whether or not you have Machado Joseph Disease. The test will show if you have the change to the gene that causes MJD. This is done by counting something called a CAG repeat in the DNA. 11-31 is normal. 52-87 means you will get MJD.

Who knows about what the blood test shows?

A specialist doctor called a geneticist will read the test and write a report for your local doctor. Whether you have a good news story or a bad news story, the only people that will know are the geneticist, the doctors and nurses in the clinic. It is up to you whether you tell anyone else.

You might want to tell the MJD Foundation too, but this is your choice.

Who can I talk to if I have questions or concerns?

MJD Foundation staff

Phone: 1300-584-122

Email: libby.massey@mjd.org.au

Your Health clinic doctors, nurses and health workers.