

# Any Lab Test Now

## CORTISOL, TOTAL TEST

### **DESCRIPTION**

Cortisol, also known as hydrocortisone, is a hormone released by the adrenal gland in response to stress. When responding to a stressful situation cortisol prepares the body for a fight or flight response by increasing blood sugar, suppressing the immune system, and aiding in fat, protein and carbohydrate metabolism for increased energy. Cortisol also prevents the release of substances that cause inflammation so it is used to treat diseases that cause inflammation such as rheumatoid arthritis and allergies.

Although cortisol is critical for our survival, too much cortisol is damaging to the body and can cause hyperglycemia, abdominal fat production, obesity, decreased bone density, compromised immune and inflammation response, increased blood pressure, damage to the heart, and may lead to Cushing's syndrome. Too little and our bodies don't function properly either. Damage to the adrenal gland or an autoimmune disease can reduce the amount of cortisol produced leading to weight loss, fatigue, low blood pressure, vomiting, diarrhea and loss of consciousness.

### **WHY DO I NEED THIS TEST?**

Any of these symptoms could be an indication that cortisol levels are too high or too low. Damage to the adrenal gland, chronic stress, a tumor or an autoimmune disorder can lead to abnormal cortisol levels in the blood. Because cortisol is important in dealing with stress and regulating bodily functions during stressful situations its lack can leave us unable to handle normal situations as well as stressful ones. Unusual weakness and fatigue could be signs that the body is low on cortisol.

Chronic stress, long-term use of corticosteroids, a tumor on the pituitary or adrenal gland, or cancer can lead to the overproduction of cortisol leading to high blood pressure, extra weight around the midsection and ultimately to Cushing's syndrome. The symptoms of Cushing's syndrome include a round, reddish face, pads of fat on the chest and upper back, diabetes, high blood pressure, tendency to bruise, high blood sugar and emotional changes. Medications, surgery and/or radiation can be used to treat the effects of high or low cortisol levels.

### **AM I REQUIRED TO FAST FOR THIS PANEL OF LAB TESTS?**

No. You are not required to fast for this test.

### **WRITTEN BY:**

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Ekan Essien, MD, MPH, a native Georgian, received his BA from Duke University. Dr. Essien continued his education at Florida A&M University where he received his Masters of Public Health in Epidemiology; received his medical degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee; and obtained training in general and trauma surgery at Grady Memorial Hospital at Morehouse School of Medicine. He is a candidate in the post graduate fellowship in anti-aging and regenerative medicine from the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SCHEDULE YOUR TEST TODAY CALL 1.800.384.4567**

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