What is a ctDNA test?

This is a simple blood test that can help your doctors to understand your cancer and choose the most suitable treatment for you.

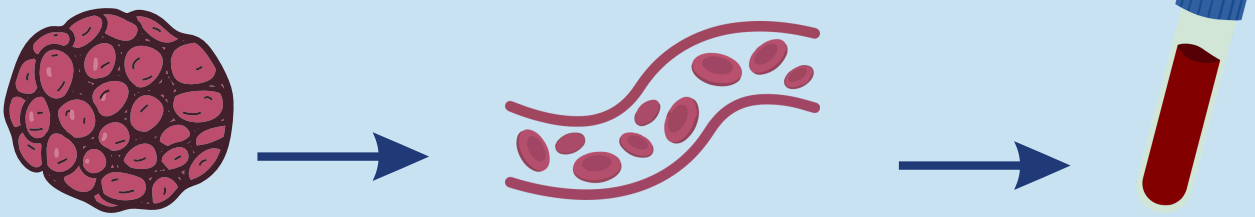
What is ctDNA?

DNA is the genetic material inside our cells that controls how they work.

Cancer cells release small fragments of their DNA into the bloodstream. This is called circulating tumour DNA (ctDNA).

A blood test can look for this DNA to give your doctors more information about your cancer.

How does ctDNA testing work?



Cancer cells release DNA fragments

DNA fragments (ctDNA) circulate in the bloodstream

A blood test detects the ctDNA

How can a ctDNA test help?

Less invasive than a biopsy - just a blood test

Results usually back in 2 weeks

Helps Doctors choose most effective treatment

Can show changes in cancer over time

May help you find a clinical trial

It's important to know

- Not all cancers release enough ctDNA to be detected
- A normal result does not rule out cancer or genetic changes
- You may still need other tests such as a tissue biopsy
- Accuracy can be affetced by the type and amount of cancer

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What is a ctDNA test?

Can I say no to the test?

Yes. Having this test is entirely your choice.

If you choose not to have the test, your doctor will discuss alternative options with you.

What happens if I agree to the test?

1. A nurse or a trained healthcare professional will take a blood sample (usually 2 small tubes).
2. The sample is sent to the Cancer Genetics Laboratory at Guy's Hospital. They will analyse the cancer DNA in your blood.
3. A report is sent to your doctor and they will discuss the result with you.
4. Results are normally available in about 2 weeks.

What do the results mean?

Result indicates that there is a genetic change

This means that changes linked to cancer have been detected. These results may help guide your treatment or futher care.

Result shows no significant changes

This means that no relevant genetic changes were detected in the blood.
This does not always mean that cancer or genetic changes are absent as not all tumours release detectable ctDNA

An unclear or inconclusive result

In some cases, the test may not provide a clear result. This can happen if there is not enough ctDNA in the sample, or due to technical reasons.

Your clinical team will discuss your results with you and explain what they mean for your care

Will this affect my treatment?

The results of your ctDNA test may help your medical team make decisions about your care. For example, they may:

- Help identify treatments that are more likely to be effective
- Provide information about how the cancer is changing over time
- Help guide further tests or monitoring

However, ctDNA results are only one part of your overall assessment. Your doctor will consider these results alongside other tests and clinical information before making any treatment decisions.

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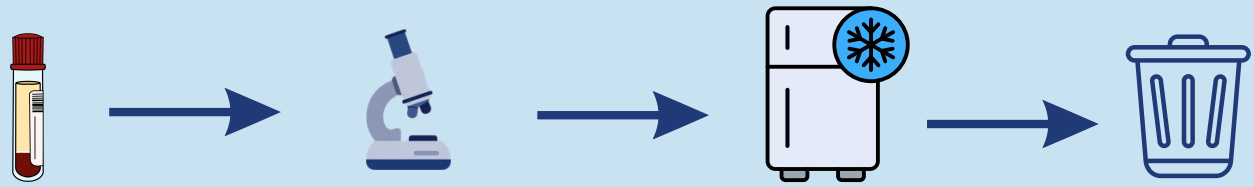
What is a ctDNA test?

Can this test identify inherited genetic changes?

In rare cases, this test may find a genetic change that could be inherited. If this happens, your medical team will explain what it means.

What happens to my sample?



Your blood sample will be sent to a specialist laboratory

The sample will be tested to look for genetic changes related to your cancer.

Any remaining sample may be stored securely for a short time in case additional testing is needed.

After this, it will be safely disposed of according to NHS guidelines.

Will my information be kept confidential?

Yes.

- Your information is kept securely within the NHS
- Your results will be stored in your medical records

Are there any risks?

This test involves a routine blood test. It is very safe.

Questions & support

If you have any questions about this test, please speak to your doctor or specialist nurse.