Low Dose Dexamethasone Suppression Test

Introduction
This is a test for the diagnosis of Cushing syndrome by measuring the serum and urine cortisol levels after giving fixed doses of oral dexamethasone (0.5 mg) over 2 days. The test can be combined with a high dose dexamethasone suppression test (2 mg doses for another 2 days) to look for the underlying cause of Cushing's syndrome.

The Procedure
- Low dose (0.5 mg) dexamethasone will be given orally for a total of 8 doses.
- Blood and urine samples to measure the cortisol level will be taken during the test.

Risk and Complication
No significant side effects for short-term use of dexamethasone, though there is a risk of hyperglycaemia particularly in patients with diabetes or impaired glucose tolerance but this will be monitored and appropriate measures to maintain normal glucose levels will be taken during the test.

Before the Procedure
- The procedure takes about 4 days to complete.
- A 24-hour urine sample to measure the cortisol level will be collected at the beginning of the test.

After the Procedure
During and after finishing the procedure, nursing staff will check with the patient for any discomfort related to the examination and patient's vital signs, such as blood pressure, pulse and temperature.

Follow Up
The patient can call the endocrine / diabetes center for enquiry if there is any query or discomfort in relation to the procedure shortly after discharge.

Remarks
This is general information only and the list of complications is not exhaustive. Other unforeseen complications may occasionally occur. In special patient groups, the actual risk may be different. For further information please contact your doctor.