

Tests to check your kidneys

What is a test to check my kidneys?

You may have this test before and during your treatment to check how well your kidneys are working. It is sometimes called EDTA or GFR.

Why do I need to have this test?

Your treatment might be planned based on how well your kidneys are working – for example it helps your doctors know how much chemotherapy you should have. Also, some chemotherapy and targeted therapy drugs can affect the way your kidneys work.

This means you may have a kidney test before starting treatment and sometimes during and after. You will also have regular blood tests to check your kidneys during treatment.

What happens?

The nurse will put a small, plastic tube (cannula) into a vein in your arm. Some people might find having the cannula put in a little uncomfortable. If you are worried about it hurting, you can ask to have an anaesthetic cream or a cold spray to numb the area.

After this, they give you an injection of a small amount of radioactive dye into your cannula. They then take blood samples from your other arm every hour for up to four hours. The results of these tests show how well your kidneys are working to get rid of the dye.

After the test

They will take your cannula out and put a plaster over the area. You can usually go home straight after the test.

The results go straight to your doctor and are used to plan your treatment.