

GREATER BOSTON GASTROENTEROLOGY

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You are scheduled for a KRISTALOSE BREATH TEST on:

_____ **at:** _____

This test is used to determine if bacteria have invaded the small intestine either from the stomach, where they are usually killed by stomach acid, or from the large intestine, where they are normally found and are necessary for normal intestinal function.

Bacteria in the colon (large intestine) break down complex sugars and release hydrogen, methane and carbon dioxide. Some of the gases are reabsorbed into the blood stream and are brought to the lungs, where they are exhaled with your breath. The time at which these trace gases are detected in the lung air after the ingestion of a dose of a special sugar, lactulose, can be used to estimate where the bacteria are located in the intestinal tract. Lactulose is a “special” sugar because it cannot be absorbed by humans, but is digested only by bacteria. If trace gases appear early on in the test, it means that the bacteria must exist toward the stomach. If trace gases appear only later in the test, the bacteria must reside in the colon only.

PREPARATION for the test:

1. No food or liquids for at least 12 hours before the test. You may have water to drink.
2. No high-fiber or slowly digesting foods the day before the test. For example: bran, coarse breads, nuts, beans and similar vegetables.
3. No smoking at least 1/2 hour before the test.
4. No sleeping or vigorous exercising for at least one hour before, or during the test.
5. No antibiotics for 2 weeks prior to test.

When you come in for the test, you will be asked to drink the sugar-water solution. Samples will then be taken of your exhaled breath at intervals. As comparison, a breath sample will be taken before you drink the solution. The procedure is simple and painless; it involves no needles. The entire test requires several samples taken over a period of about 3 hours. During this time, you may engage in quiet activity while waiting between samples. No food or liquids may be eaten during the test.