

Patient information leaflet

Lung function tests

Respiratory department

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your lung function tests. Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

What are lung function tests?

Lung function tests are breathing tests that provide the requesting doctor/nurse with a detailed assessment of how well your lungs are working.

Are there any reasons why I shouldn't do the tests?

If you have had any changes to your health in the last 4-6 weeks leading up to the tests it might be necessary to change your appointment. To discuss anything that you think may affect the tests, please call using the telephone number on your appointment letter.

Examples include:

- Recent surgery to your chest, abdomen or eyes (within the last 6 weeks).
- A collapsed lung or broken ribs.
- Recent heart attack or stroke (within the last month).
- Chest infections (within the last two weeks).
- Cerebral and aortic aneurysms.
- Coughing up blood.
- Recent diarrhea or vomiting (last few days).

Why do I need lung function tests?

There are several reasons for performing these tests. They can help make a diagnosis, quantify the degree of lung damage, assess the progress of your existing breathing condition, assess fitness for surgery and assess how your lung function improves with the use of an inhaler.

What are the associated risks of lung function tests?

Due to the nature of the tests and the exertion required, some patients may feel dizzy or faint during testing. Coughing is also common.

Serious complications are very rare and risks will be minimized by the physiologist. We will ask you to repeat the tests a few times to ensure accurate results. If you find the tests too difficult or uncomfortable we can stop them at any time.

Preparing for your procedure

In order to achieve the most accurate results:

- Avoid smoking for at least 24 hours (if possible).
- Avoid alcohol for 4 hours prior to your test.
- Avoid vigorous exercise.
- Avoid tight clothing and eating a substantial meal for at least 2 hours prior to the test.
- Height and weight will be taken – please wear easily removable shoes.

Medication

Please try not to use the following medication for the time specified **before** your appointment:

- **Short acting inhalers (4 Hours)** – for example Ventolin (Salbutamol), Salamol, Airomir, Atrovent and Bricanyl (Terbutaline).
- **Long acting and combination inhalers (12 Hours)** – for example Anoro Ellipta, Fostair, Relvar, Seretide, Spiolto Respimat, Spiriva, Symbicort, Trelegy, Trimbrow.

If your inhaler is not named above, please try not to use it on the day of your test and bring any inhalers with you to your appointment.

If it is difficult to manage without your inhaler, please continue to use it when required but make a note of the time you take it and inform the member of staff performing your test. You may continue to take all other medication as prescribed by your doctor.

Getting to us

Once you have arrived at The Princess Alexandra Hospital (Hamstel Road, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QX) follow the signage to the cardiology corridor, which is located on the ground floor, blue zone. Please let the cardiology receptionist know that you have arrived for your appointment.

When should I arrive?

Please arrive at the department approximately 10 minutes prior to your appointment time. Make sure you leave yourself plenty of time to park and to get to the department.

Can someone come with me to my appointment?

You may have a friend or family member attend with you, but they will be asked to stay in the waiting area while you have your procedure.

Children are not allowed in the waiting area unattended. Our staff are not permitted to supervise children, so please ensure child care arrangements are in place to avoid your tests being rescheduled.

The day of the procedure

On the day of the procedure, the physiologist will explain the tests to you, check through some safety questions and answer any questions you may have. Before starting your height and weight will be taken.

The procedure

For all the tests, you will be sitting down with a peg on your nose and will breathe in and out of a tube. There are three main tests and you may be asked to perform one or all three:

- **Lung volumes** – this is a measurement of the volume of air in your lungs. For this test, you will be sitting in a box and will breathe in and out in a pattern described by the physiologist.
- **Gas transfer** – this is a measurement of how well oxygen travels from your lungs into your blood. This involves breathing in a gas mixture and holding your breath for 5-10 seconds.
- **Spirometry** – this is a measurement of how open your airways are. This involves blowing out as hard as you can and until empty.

After the procedure

Once we have completed the tests, you will be discharged from the department and can continue as normal with your activities.

Can I drive after my tests?

You are able to drive as soon as you are discharged from the department.

How soon can I return to work?

You are able to return to work as soon as you are discharged from the department.

When will I get my results?

The physiologist will send off the report immediately to the clinician who arranged your procedure. The clinician will discuss the results with you at your next clinic appointment.

Contacting the team

If you have any further questions about the tests or an existing appointment, please contact the Lung Function Department at **01279 827586**.

If you have any urgent queries **outside of working hours (after 4pm and on weekends)**, regarding existing appointments, please leave a voicemail and one of the team members will return your call as soon as possible.

Please note appointment bookings cannot be made during this time.

Your feedback matters

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on paht.pals@nhs.net or **01279 827211**.

Please contact the communications team on paht.communications@nhs.net if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.