

Full lung function test

Cardio-Respiratory Department

Information for patients and carers

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Caring for you

Lung function test

What is a lung function test?

A lung function test checks how well your lungs are working.

The test can show:

- how much air your lungs can hold
- how well air moves in and out of your lungs
- how well your lungs take oxygen from the air

Why do I need this test?

The test can help us:

- find out why you have breathing problems
- find out why you feel short of breath
- check for lung conditions, such as asthma
- see how well your lungs are working
- check if your breathing medicines are helping
- monitor a lung condition you already have
- check your lungs before surgery

The results of your test will help your healthcare team decide:

- whether you need treatment
- if you need more tests

What happens during the test?

During the test you will:

- sit in a chair
- wear a nose clip
- breathe through a mouthpiece

We will explain each part of the test before it starts.

We may ask you to:

- take a deep breath in
- blow out as hard and as fast as you can
- hold your breath for a few seconds
- breathe in and out normally

Some parts of the test may be carried out in a small booth with the door closed.

The door is not locked. You can open it at any time.

Family members and friends will stay outside the test room.

We may ask you to use a nebuliser during the test.

A nebuliser is a machine that helps you breathe in medicine. Using it during the test does not mean you will need to use this medicine afterwards.

How long will the test take?

Please check your appointment letter to find out which test you are having.

- spirometry (basic lung function test): about 20 minutes
- spirometry with breathing medicines: up to 45 minutes
- full lung function test: up to 1 hour

What do I need to do before the test?

Please wear loose, comfortable clothes.

Bring any inhalers you use.

On the day of your test:

- do not drink alcohol
- do not eat within 2 hours of the test
- do not exercise for 3 to 4 hours before the test
- do not smoke for 24 hours before the test
- do not use your inhalers unless you need to or your appointment letter tells you to

What do you need to know?

Please contact us before your test if you have:

- a chest infection now, or have had one in the last 6 weeks
- had eye, stomach or chest surgery in the last 4 weeks
- had a heart attack or stroke in the last month
- had a blood clot on the lung in the last 4 weeks
- had a collapsed lung in the last 4 weeks
- chest pain on the day of the test
- been to A&E in the last 2 to 3 days
- flu symptoms, diarrhoea, vomiting, or a positive Covid-19 test

What if I need ambulance transport?

Ask your GP to arrange this at least 3 days before your appointment.

Please also tell us that you will be arriving by ambulance.

What if I cannot attend my appointment?

If you cannot attend, please contact us as soon as possible.

We can arrange a new appointment.

Contact us

Cardio-Respiratory Department

For enquiries

Call: 01925 662483

For appointments

Call: 01925 275584

Phone lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.