

Routine lung function tests

Lung Function Unit Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This booklet gives general information before your visit on the routine lung function tests carried out by the lung function unit. It does not replace the need for personal advice from a healthcare professional so please ask us if you have any questions at the time of your test.

What are routine lung function tests?

These are non-invasive simple tests on your breathing so that the doctor can see how well your lungs are working.

What happens during the tests?

During the routine lung function tests, you will sit on a chair either outside or inside a glass-enclosed booth. We will ask you to wear a nose clip so that no air escapes through your nose, and you will then breathe into a sterile filtered mouthpiece. The tests will usually be repeated to get your best measurement.

Before the tests start, the physiologist (technician) will explain the tests to you in detail and will answer any questions that you may have.

Here is a brief guide to the types of tests that are carried out:

Spirometry / flow volume loop

This test shows how well you breathe in and out. The physiologist will ask you to take as deep a breath in as you can and to blast it out as hard and long as you can.

Gas transfer factor

This test determines how well gases such as oxygen move from your lungs into your blood. The physiologist will ask you to breathe in, hold your breath for about 10 seconds and then breathe out again.

Lung volumes

This test can give us information on how big or small your lungs are. It involves breathing in and out normally for a few minutes against a small resistance of air produced by our testing machine.

What are the benefits of lung function tests?

You may have been referred by your GP or specialist consultant because you have been experiencing symptoms relating to your breathing or a chest problem. The tests can help with diagnosing what may be causing these symptoms.

Sometimes these tests are needed to see how well the lungs are working in people who need lung surgery or radiotherapy to the chest.

What are the risks?

There are no known risks associated with these tests; however, some of the breathing tests may be tiring. We will give you time to recover between and after the tests.

Do I have to have these tests?

No. You do not have to have these tests but if you do not have them, we will not be able to pass important information to your doctor. This may affect the medical treatment you receive.

How do I prepare for the tests?

- Do not smoke for 24 hours before the tests.
- Do not drink alcohol for four hours before the tests.
- Do not eat a large meal for two hours before the tests.
- Avoid any vigorous exercise for 30 minutes before the tests.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing during the tests to allow your chest to expand freely.

The results of your tests may be affected by all of these factors.

What happens if I am taking inhalers and other medication?

The doctor may want us to check your breathing response to certain types of inhaled medication, by measuring your breathing before and after taking inhalers or nebulisers. For this reason, we ask you to stop taking the medications listed at the bottom of your appointment letter before coming for the tests.

If you find it difficult to manage without your inhaler, please use your bronchodilator and inform us on arrival.

You can take all other medication as normal.

What should I tell you when I come for the tests?

Please tell us if any of the following apply to you:

- You have coughed up any blood in the last two months.
- You have had any surgery in the last two months, including eye surgery.
- You have taken any medicine for chest pain in the last month.
- You have been told by a doctor you have a blood clot.
- You have had a heart attack in the last two months.
- You have a current chest infection and are taking antibiotic treatment for it.
- You have been told by your doctor that you have a collapsed lung, a broken or cracked rib, or a problem with your neck vertebrae.
- You feel unwell on the day of the test.

How long do the tests take?

The full test procedure takes between 20 to 45 minutes.

When will I hear my results?

If the tests were requested urgently by a respiratory consultant or other specialist within the team to help decide what treatment you should have, the results will be discussed with you as soon as they are available. You may be asked to come to the outpatient department at short notice.

If the tests were not requested by one of the respiratory consultants, the results will need to be analysed by a respiratory consultant. The consultant will then send a report to the doctor who referred you for the test. The results will be discussed with you at your next hospital appointment.

If your next appointment is some time away and the tests show that your treatment needs to change, your hospital appointment may be brought forward, or your GP may receive a letter asking them to contact you.

Can I find out more?

We hope that this booklet has answered questions that you may have about your breathing tests. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything further you would like to know. You can speak to one of the lung function physiologists on:

01384 456111 ext. 3167 (24 hour answer phone)

Alternatively, you may wish to make notes of any questions you would like to ask the physiologist at the time of the test.

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Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/respiratory-medicine/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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