

# Pulmonary Function Tests

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**Pulmonary function tests** are done to check how well your lungs work. These tests can measure your lung volume (the amount of air your lungs hold), flow (how quickly air moves in and out) and gas exchange (how well your lungs pick up oxygen).

## **Pulmonary function tests may be done:**

- To check for lung disease or other lung conditions, like asthma.
- To check for changes in your lung function.
- To find the best treatment option for you.
- Before surgery to check if you are at risk for breathing problems.

## **Before Your Test**

Before your test, it is important to talk with a member of your health care team about all medicines you take, including all the medicines ordered by any of your doctors, herbs, vitamins and over-the-counter medicines. You may be told to stop taking some medicines for a period of time before your test.

- **Do not** smoke for at least 1 hour before your test.
- **Do not** drink alcohol at least 4 hours before your test.
- **Do not** do vigorous exercise at least 30 minutes before your test.
- **Do not** wear tight clothes to your test. Tight clothes may make you unable to take a full, deep breath during your test.
- **Do not** eat a large meal at least 2 hours before your test. A full stomach may make you unable to take a full, deep breath during your test.

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**This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

## During Your Test

- Pulmonary function tests are done in the Pulmonary Function Laboratory. A **Respiratory Therapist** will help you complete these tests.
- Your therapist will tell you what you will do for each test. You may be asked to breathe in as deeply as you can and then blow air out as fast as you can. You also may be asked to breathe normally, and then take in a big breath and hold it several seconds. You may repeat tests several times to make sure your measurements are accurate.
- A nose clip will be put on your nose during the tests. This is done to make sure you only breathe through your mouth. If air escapes through your nose, the measurements may not be accurate.
- You may be given a medicine to inhale (breathe in). Tests will be done to see how well this medicine works.
- These tests can make you tired or short of breath. If needed, you can take rest breaks during the tests.
- Blood tests may be done to check the amount of oxygen, carbon dioxide and/or hemoglobin in your blood.

## After Your Test

- Your doctor will review your test results and discuss the findings with you.
- There are no side effects from these tests. You may feel tired and want to rest after your tests are done.