

Lung Function Laboratory

Lung function tests

Information for patients, relatives and carers

This leaflet has been designed to give you information about **lung function tests**. We hope to answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team. It aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below, please call the Lung Function Labs (see Useful contacts, below).

Introduction

Lung function tests measure how well your lungs are working. They involve a series of breathing exercises which measure different aspects of your lung function.

What should I expect on the day?

You will be seen by a member of the respiratory physiology team.

We start by checking:

- your recent medical history to make sure it is safe to perform the tests
- your height and weight so that we can interpret the results correctly

You perform the tests using a mouthpiece attached to the measuring equipment. You also wear a nose clip so that no air can pass through your nose. This makes sure we measure all the air that you breathe. We will normally ask you to perform each test a minimum of three times to make sure the results are consistent. You will be able to rest in between the measurements.

We will always ask for your verbal consent before performing any tests.

A family member, carer or friend can accompany you for the test if you would like them to. A chaperone can also be provided. If you have any questions about this, or think you may need a translator, please contact the relevant department using one of the telephone numbers at the end of this leaflet.

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

If you have had any changes to your health in the **4 to 6 weeks** leading up to the test, it may be necessary to rearrange your appointment. To talk about anything you think may affect your test performance, please call using the telephone number on your appointment letter or below.

Examples of this include:

- recent surgery to your chest, abdomen or eyes (cataract or laser eye surgery)
- a collapsed lung or broken ribs
- episodes of chest pain or a heart attack
- chest infections requiring antibiotic treatment
- recent (ongoing) cold, flu or COVID symptoms
- coughing up blood
- a lot of runny poo (diarrhoea) or being sick (vomiting)

How should I prepare for the test?

- wear comfortable clothing that does not restrict your breathing capacity
- do not eat a heavy meal within 2 hours of your appointment
- do not smoke on the day of the test
- avoid alcohol for at least 4 hours before the test
- avoid vigorous exercise at least 30 minutes before your test

What if I use an inhaler?

You should take your inhalers as normal on the day of the test. This is unless told otherwise by a member of our team or your medical team. If you are advised to withhold using your inhaler on the day of testing, see the table below to see for how long.

Inhaler type / trade name	Hours to withhold
Short-acting (Ventolin, Salamol, Bricanyl)	at least 4 hours before the test
Long-acting (Symbicort, Seretide, Fostair, Relvar)	at least 12 hours before the test

Please contact us if you have any questions about your inhaler use before the test. Sometimes we may need you to stop taking antihistamines too, but we will let you know this in advance.

How do I get the test results?

Your test results are usually available immediately after the tests have been completed. Once the report is ready, we upload it to the hospital information system so that the referring team can see the results. If you have been referred from a different hospital, we will send a copy out to them.

The referring doctor needs to see and interpret the results, looking at your medical history and any other tests you may have had. A summary of the tests will be sent to your GP and you.

Useful contacts

Your appointment letter will tell you which hospital the test is booked at. The telephone numbers for each site are listed below.

Lung Function Labs:

Charing Cross Hospital	020 3311 7180
Hammersmith Hospital	020 3313 2352
St Mary's Hospital	020 3312 6022
Willesden Community Diagnostic Centre	020 3704 6578

If you need to change your outpatient appointment with the doctor or nurse, call the outpatient booking office on 020 3313 5000.

For information about accessing our hospital sites, including public transport and parking information, please visit the Trust's website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

Respiratory Physiology
Published: September 2024
Review date: September 2027
Reference no: 1126
© Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust