

## Respiratory Medicine Department Patient Information

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If you need this information in large print, easy read, on audiotape or in another language please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)

If you wish to obtain a list of the sources used to develop this information leaflet please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail [patient.info@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.info@dchft.nhs.uk)

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# Cardio-Pulmonary Exercise Test

## Why do I need the test?

This exercise test, sometimes called a Stress Test, provides your doctor with information about your breathing and heart during physical activity.

## What should I wear?

Ideally you should wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes and shoes suitable for exercise. You may wish to bring a change of clothes for after the test.

## Should I eat before the exercise test?

You are requested to only have a light breakfast or lunch one to two hours before the test.

## Should I take my medication?

You should continue taking any medication as usual. Please bring a list of your current medication and avoid any strenuous exercise for a few hours before the appointment

## The Test Procedure:

### On Arrival

Initially you will perform a simple breathing test and your blood pressure will be taken. Then you will be asked to strip down to the waist so that a physiologist can clean your skin and put some self-adhesive electrodes on to your chest.

### The Exercise:

The exercise will usually be done on a bicycle (ergometer). If you cannot use the cycle you may be asked to walk on a treadmill instead. The workload starts at an easy level and progressively increases to a level that will exert you to your maximum, ideally in less than 10 minutes. You will have to breathe through a mask or a mouthpiece. During the test you will be fully monitored and blood pressure readings will be taken.

## **Is the test safe?**

The test has been requested by a doctor who will have examined you during a visit to the Out-Patient Clinic or on the Ward. The doctor will have assessed that you should be capable of performing the exertion required. In addition to the trained physiologists who will be monitoring you during the test a doctor is always present in the Cardiology department during exercise testing.

## **How long does the test take?**

The full test procedure will take about an hour.

## **What does the test show?**

The lungs and the heart work in closely together to provide oxygen to your body to enable you to exercise to your maximum limit. By monitoring both your breathing and ECG during this "stress test" it is possible to determine what may be causing your exercise capacity to be limited.

Depending on the reason for the test, the results can be used to determine suitability for surgery.

## **When will I know the result?**

The results will take some time to be analysed. A report will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the test. The results will be discussed with you at your next outpatient appointment.

If your next appointment is some time away and the test shows that some alteration to your treatment is required your hospital appointment may be brought forward or your GP may receive a letter asking them to speak to you.

We hope that this leaflet has answered questions that you may have about your Cardio-Pulmonary Exercise Test.

## **Further Information**

Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything further you would like to know. Please ring the number on this information leaflet and ask to speak to Chris Jones (Chief Physiologist) or Keith Butterfield (Senior Chief Physiologist).

You can reach the Respiratory Medicine department via Entrance North 1. It is situated on Level 2.

Clinical Physiologists      01305 255420 (direct line)