



Pulmonary Function Test (PFT)

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What is pulmonary function testing and why is it done?

Pulmonary function tests (also called PFTs or lung function tests) help determine how well your lungs are functioning. The results of these tests tell your physician how much air your lungs can hold, how quickly you can move air into and out of your lungs, and how well your lungs are able to use oxygen and get rid of carbon dioxide. The tests help your physician determine if you have a lung disease, help provide a measure of how significant your lung disease is, and can show how well the treatment for your lung disease is working.

How is a pulmonary function test done?

Pulmonary function testing is usually done by a specially trained respiratory therapist or technician. For most pulmonary function tests, you will be asked to wear a nose clip to make sure that no air passes through your nose during the test. You will be asked to breathe into a mouthpiece that is connected to a machine called a spirometer. The technician may encourage you to breathe deeply during parts of the test to get the best results. Following all of the technician's instructions will help provide the most accurate results.

How do I prepare for my test?

- You should not eat a heavy meal just before this test.
- You should not smoke for six hours before the test.
- You should not exercise vigorously for six hours before the test.
- On the day of the test, avoid food or drinks that have caffeine.
- On the day of the test, wear loose clothing that does not restrict your breathing in any way.
- If you have dentures, wear them during the test.

Should I take my medications on the day of the test?

You can take everything but your inhalers. If you take *Albuterol*, *Combivent* or *Atrovent* you should stop taking them eight hours before the test. If you are on *Advair*, stop taking it 12 hours before test. *Antihistamines* should not be taken 48 hours before the test. Stop taking *Serevent* 12 hours before the test.

Remember: *always consult with your physician prior to stopping or holding any medication. He or she will make the final decision on what medications are suitable for you to have prior to testing.*

How should I feel during the test?

Since the test involves some forced breathing and rapid breathing, you may have some temporary shortness of breath or lightheadedness. During the test you breathe through a tight-fitting mouthpiece, using a nose clip.

How long does the test take?

If you need spirometry testing only, it should take only 30 minutes. If you need a complete PFT, it takes about one hour.

How do I get my test results?

The PFTs are interpreted by our pulmonologist, who is specially trained in pulmonary (lung) diseases and conditions. The test results and interpretation are sent to the physician who ordered the test for you. Your physician will set up an appointment to review the test results with you.