

Six-minute walk test

Respiratory

This leaflet has been written to provide information on the six-minute walk test. It is not intended to replace talking to a healthcare professional.

Introduction

This leaflet aims to provide information on a six-minute walk test. Your consultant has requested that we perform this test to help guide your medical treatment. The six-minute walk test is a type of exercise test which is used to assess your exercise tolerance by determining how far you are capable of walking in six minutes. The test differs from other exercise tests in that you can walk at your own pace, resting whenever you feel that you need to.

Doctors commonly request this test to:

- Measure the severity of lung disease
- To see if medication will make your breathing better
- To test your lung function before an operation or investigation.

How should I prepare for the test?

Please wear flat comfortable shoes and suitable clothing. Bring along any walking aids you would normally use. Do not exercise vigorously for at least 30 minutes prior to the test and continue to take your medications and inhalers as normal prior to attendance. If you use a GTN spray for angina please bring this with you to your appointment.

What happens during the test?

Before the test begins the Respiratory Physiologist will explain the test to you in detail and will answer any questions that you may have.

You will be asked to walk up and down a flat corridor, up to and around two plastic cones which will be set 15 metres apart. You will be instructed to walk at a pace that is comfortable for you but to keep in mind that the goal of the test is try and walk as far as you can within six minutes. You will be able to use any walking aids that you may need, such as a walking stick or walking frame.

You will be able to stop and rest as often and for as long as you need to during the test. If you do stop to rest the clock (six-minute timer) will continue to run, therefore the six minutes required to complete the test includes when you are walking but also when you are resting.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Before, during and after the test, both your oxygen levels and heart rate will be monitored using a device called a pulse oximeter. This involves wearing a clip on your earlobe which is connected to a device which is worn on your wrist; very much like wearing a wrist watch.

Once the six minutes is complete, the test is ended. You will be seated again to rest and recover, and your oxygen levels and heart rate will continue to be monitored. You will be able to leave once you feel fully recovered.

How long will the appointment take?

Although the actual walk test itself takes only six minutes to complete, you will be with us for around 20-30 minutes in total as we will need to also undertake some pre-test checks plus allow time for you to recover.

Will I experience any side effects or discomfort?

There are no known side effects associated with this test.

Is there a different test that I can have?

There is no other test that would give us the same information about your exercise capacity.

Are there any medical conditions that would prevent me from undertaking the test?

Yes, please see the list below. Contact the department if you have experienced any of the following:

- A current or recent chest infection within the last two weeks prior to the test
- Recent eye, stomach or chest surgery
- A heart attack within the last month prior to the test
- Any chest pain on the day of the test
- Attended an Emergency department (A&E) in the last 2 to 3 days prior to the test.

When will I get my results?

The results of the test will go to the doctor or healthcare professional that referred you. They will discuss the results with you at your next clinic visit. Please note you will not be given the results on the day of the test.

What should I do if I cannot attend on the day of my appointment?

If you are unable to attend, please inform the department as soon as possible so that the appointment time can be offered to another patient. If you are unfortunately admitted into hospital please inform the ward staff of this appointment so they can re-arrange the test for you when you are feeling better.

Reference

American Thoracic Society (2002) ATS Statement: *Guidelines for the Six-Minute Walk Test*. American Journal of Respiratory Critical Care Medicine. Am J Crit Care Med 2002; 166:111-117

If you have any concerns or questions or require further information please contact:

The Respiratory Centre (B1)
New Cross Hospital
Wolverhampton Road
Wolverhampton
WV10 0QP
01902 695061
Monday – Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。