

Pulmonary Function Tests

Basic information

This handout gives basic information about pulmonary function tests.

You are scheduled for testing on:

DAY _____ DATE _____ TIME _____

If you need to reschedule or cancel, please call 206-598-4265.

What are pulmonary function tests?

Pulmonary function tests (PFTs) show how well your lungs are working. There are many different types of PFTs. All are *noninvasive*, which means nothing is put inside your body to do the tests. Results of your PFTs may help your doctor diagnose your lung disorder.

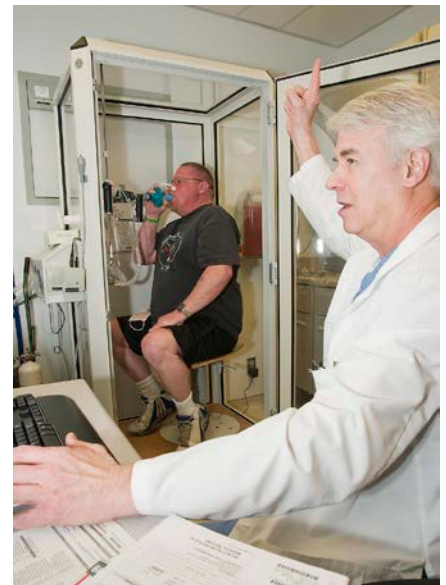
What do PFTs measure?

One of the main things a healthy pulmonary system does is provide *ventilation*. This is the flow of air into and out of the lungs. Conditions that affect ventilation are either *restrictive* or *obstructive*. If you have a restrictive condition, it is hard to fill your lungs with air. If you have an obstructive condition, it is hard to exhale all the air from your lungs.

Why do I need pulmonary testing?

Pulmonary testing may be done for many different reasons. Some of these are:

- As part of a routine physical exam, especially if you smoke or have smoked in the past
- To help diagnose lung conditions or diseases such as asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, or pulmonary fibrosis



The results of your pulmonary function tests will help your doctor diagnose your lung disorder.

- To test your lung function before surgery
- To check the extent of your lung disease or to help explain new breathing symptoms you are having
- To find out if your breathing medicine is working
- To check if you are having side effects from some medicines that can make it hard to breathe

Before Your Test

- Your doctor will explain the test to you. Be sure to ask any questions that you have.
- If you use an inhaler, do not use it within 4 hours of your test.
- If you take breathing medicine regularly, do not take it within 4 hours of your test.
- Do not exercise before your pulmonary tests. Save your energy so you can give your best effort during the test.
- Most times, patients do not need to fast, restrict fluids, or take sedation for these tests. But, eating a heavy meal before your test may make it harder to take deep breaths during the test.
- If you smoke, you will usually be asked **not** to smoke the day of the test.

After Your Test

- You may feel tired after your test. Rest until you feel comfortable enough to leave the testing center.
- After you leave the testing center, call your doctor **right away** if you have:
 - Shortness of breath
 - Chest pain
 - Trouble breathing
- After your test is done, the results will be reviewed by a doctor who specializes in pulmonary tests. This doctor will send a report to your doctor. Remember, the pulmonary testing by itself does not diagnose a disease, but it will help your doctor make a correct diagnosis.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Pulmonary Diagnostic Center: 206-598-4265

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206-598-6190 and ask for the Pulmonary Fellow on call to be paged.