

# Information for patients attending for a 6 minute walk test

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We would like to invite you to attend for a 6 minute walk test as requested by a consultant. This information sheet will explain what a 6 minute walk test involves and answer some questions you may have. It also explains why a 6 minute walk test is necessary and provides some information about how you can prepare for the test.

## What is a 6 minute walk test?

A 6 minute walk test is a type of exercise test that measures how far you can walk in 6 minutes. This will provide more information about how well your lungs are working during exercise. It is a simple test that requires minimal equipment and allows you to walk at your own pace.

## What does a 6 minute walk involve?

Before the test starts you will be fitted with a device either on your wrist and finger or earlobe that measures your oxygen saturation and heart rate continuously during the test. These measures are recorded at set intervals and documented in the report.

You will usually be asked to walk between two points that are 10 metres apart; the aim is to complete as many laps as you can. You can rest whenever you need and this time will be included within the 6 minutes of the test. We will record the distance you walk and any rest periods or symptoms you may experience during the test. You will also be asked to describe how breathless you feel using a Borg scale (0-10) before and after the test. The test may be performed using supplemental oxygen if you are currently using this or may require it.

**You can terminate the test at any point if you feel you cannot continue. We will also terminate the test if we notice something concerning before the end of the 6 minutes.**

## Why do I need a 6 minute walk test?

This test helps measure how well your lungs are supplying oxygen to the rest of the body during exercise. Some breathing problems do not occur at rest but are more noticeable during exercise. This test can also help to monitor the effectiveness of treatment or assess the need for treatment to improve exercise tolerance.

## How should I prepare for the test?

- Please take all medication as normal before the test.
- Wear comfortable clothing and footwear that is appropriate for walking.

- Please bring any walking aids required such as walking frames or sticks.
- Refrain from wearing nail varnish.
- Do not eat a LARGE meal before the test.
- Do not drink alcohol the day of the test.
- Do not smoke for at least 1 hour before the test.
- Do not perform vigorous exercise 2 hours before the test.

Please let us know before the test if you have difficulties walking or have any concerns about performing the test.

## What are the risks?

As this is an exercise test it does require some exertion therefore some patients may feel breathless, dizzy or faint during the test. You can stop the test at any point. Serious complications are rare and risks will be kept to a minimum with careful monitoring by the healthcare professionals involved.

## How will I be informed of the results?

The results will be documented and a report will be created to send to the referring consultant. They will then arrange another appointment with you to discuss the results of the test and any further management.

Please allow ample time to arrive for your appointment. Our aim is to see you promptly but we will inform you of any delays.

## Additional Information

[Tests to measure your exercise capacity | Asthma + Lung UK \(asthmaandlung.org.uk\)](http://asthmaandlung.org.uk)  
[Patient Information \(artp.org.uk\)](http://artp.org.uk)

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