

# Information for patients attending for a Cardiopulmonary Exercise Test (CPET)

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We would like to invite you to attend for a Cardiopulmonary Exercise Test (CPET) as requested by a consultant. This information document will explain what a CPET involves and answer some questions you may have. It also explains why CPET is necessary and provides some information about how you can prepare for the test.

## What is a Cardiopulmonary Exercise Test (CPET)?

A CPET is an exercise test that assesses your exercise capacity and monitors the response of your heart and lungs during exercise. The test will be performed walking on a treadmill with increasing incline.

## What does a CPET involve?

The test may start with a breathing test known as Spirometry which involves breathing maximally into a mouthpiece until completely empty. We will then prepare for the exercise test by connecting you to a variety of devices to monitor your heart rate and rhythm, oxygen saturation and blood pressure. Some patients may need to have small areas of their chest shaved to allow electrocardiograph (ECG) stickers to stick to the skin. You will also wear a mask that will measure the gases you are breathing to see how well your lungs are working during exercise.

We will start by recording some information at rest, then you will begin walking on a treadmill and exercise for up to 15 minutes. The incline of the treadmill will gradually increase until you reach a maximal limit, but you can stop the test at any point if you do not wish to continue. We will also stop the test at any point if we see anything concerning. Finally, we will need to record some information whilst you recover before ending the test.

## Why do I need a CPET?

CPET is used to assess the functioning of your heart and lungs and may highlight issues that are not seen at rest, as you may be experiencing symptoms such as shortness of breath on exertion. CPET is also a useful test for assessing fitness for surgery. This can provide useful information for deciding on the safest procedures to perform and how to prepare for post-operative care.

## What are the risks and complications of CPET?

The risks of CPET are very similar to the risks of performing moderate strenuous exercise. Possible complications include: irregular heart rhythms, abnormal blood

pressure changes and fainting. The occurrence of a complication requiring hospitalisation is  $\leq 2$  in 1000. All risks will be kept to a minimum with careful monitoring by the healthcare professionals involved. You may experience some aches and stiffness the day after the test due to the level of exercise performed during the test.

If you have any concerns and would like to discuss further please do not hesitate to call us before the test.

## How to prepare for the test?

- Please take all medication as normal before the test (please bring a list of all medication you take if possible as we can review this before the test). If you have prescribed GTN spray or inhalers please bring these with you.
- Wear comfortable clothing and footwear that is appropriate for exercise.
- Do not eat a LARGE meal before the test, a light meal a couple of hours before the test will ensure you have enough energy for the test.
- Stay hydrated, drink plenty of water and avoid caffeine before the test.
- Do not drink alcohol the day of the test.
- Do not smoke for at least 8 hours before the test.
- Do not perform vigorous exercise on the day of the test.
- Avoid using lotions on the upper body, this may effect ECG electrode attachment.

## What happens after the test?

We ask that you avoid performing any strenuous activities for the rest of the day after the exercise test. If you start to feel unwell or develop any unusual/worrying symptoms such as feeling faint, having heart palpitations, chest tightness/pain or feeling unusually short of breath you should attend the nearest A&E Department or call 999.

## 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.

## Additional information

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

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

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[www.accessable.co.uk/united-lincolnshire-hospitals-nhs-trust](http://www.accessable.co.uk/united-lincolnshire-hospitals-nhs-trust)

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