

## Practical Information

Please do not drink caffeinated drinks (tea, coffee, coke or hot chocolate) during the tests as these can affect the results.

The Royal Brompton is a teaching hospital and takes part in the on-going education of nurses, doctors and other health staff. Sometimes students or health professionals will be in the challenge laboratory to learn about Occupational Inhalation Testing. If you do not want to have students present during your tests please let us know before you arrive on the ward.

## Hospital contact details

If you have any questions before or during your stay we will be happy to help.

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Royal Brompton Hospital

# Occupational Inhalation Testing



This patient information booklet is to be used in conjunction with the Trusts' *Patient Agreement to Investigation or Treatment* booklet.

### Why do you need this test?

Occupational inhalation testing allows us to carefully recreate what happens to you when you breathe in certain substances at work. By observing how your respiratory system responds during the test, we can usually identify any substances that are causing you problems. In some cases, however, we may need more information and will look at other tests such as blood tests and serial peak flow tests before making a firm diagnosis. This happens especially when you have not been exposed to the substance for some time. The occupational inhalation test is also known as bronchial provocation testing or occupational challenge testing.

### What are the risks?

The chance of a serious reaction to the tests is very low. However, it is common for people to have a mild asthmatic reaction similar to what they may experience at work. If you do experience a reaction we will give you an inhaled drug such as salbutamol to take, which opens up the airways and normally works very quickly.

Although there is a potential risk of a more serious allergic reaction, we use safety control measures to minimise any risk.

### What happens during the test?

The test aims to recreate, in a laboratory setting, exposures to specific substances that you have come across in your working environment. We closely monitor how your lungs react to these exposures throughout the test. The test is conducted over a two week period and requires you to stay in hospital for the majority of this time.

Each day at about 9 a.m. we will give you a histamine reactivity test in the challenge laboratory. Histamine is a substance naturally produced by the body. You will be asked to breathe in some histamine via a face mask so that we can measure how irritable your airways are on that day. This test is painless.

About an hour later, the inhalation test will be performed. Each day you will be asked to inhale a substance and we will measure what happens. On some days you might inhale substances that we suspect may be causing you difficulties. On other days you will be asked to inhale harmless substances.

In order to make sure that the test is scientifically valid, we will not tell you which substances you have inhaled until we have finished all of our tests. After the tests are completed, we will explain and give you a full written copy of the results.

### How do we measure your lung function?

We used a spirometer (or vitalograph) to monitor your lung function. We will ask you to blow into this machine every hour throughout the day until you go to bed. You will need to bring a watch and a pen to record the times and readings of your blows. We will then analyse these readings to get the results of your inhalation test.

### Practical Information

You are going to be in hospital for up to two weeks while we carry out the test, although you will be allowed home for the middle weekend. You will stay in the Lind Ward, which is on the fourth floor of the Royal Brompton Hospital's south block. You will have a lot of spare time during the tests, so it's a good idea to bring in plenty to do and read. There is a pay-phone on the ward and another on which you can receive incoming calls. The number is 0207351 8946. You are not allowed to use a mobile phone anywhere in the hospital.