

Six-minute walk test instructions

Information for pulmonary hypertension patients

We are asking pulmonary hypertension patients to complete a six-minute walk test at home before a phone or video appointment. This information sheet explains why and provides a step-by-step guide for the six-minute walk test. You can also watch a video about the test on the Trust's pulmonary hypertension web page (see more information on page 3).

Why do I need to carry out the six-minute test?

The results of the six-minute walk test will help us see how your body responds to exercise so we can plan your treatment.

Some tips before you start the test

- Wear loose, comfortable clothing and sturdy, non-slip shoes.
- Do not do the test, if:
 - you are feeling more unwell
 - have a current infection
 - the weather is very hot.

Six-minute walk test instructions

1. Find a space in your home such as a corridor or a flat, outdoor path which is clear of obstacles. This is your walking track.
2. Now measure the length of your walking track in metres using a tape measure. Make sure there is enough space to turn around at each end of the track.
3. Before you start the walk, measure your breathlessness using the BORG scale (see page 2) and write down the result. If you have an oxygen probe, measure and write down your oxygen level and heart rate in the table on page 3.
4. Set a timer for six minutes. If you can, ask someone else to time the test and tell you when the six minutes are up.
5. Walk up and down your walking track at a comfortable pace continuously for six minutes. Stop and rest if you need to and then carry on (any rest times are included in your six minutes). Stop if you feel unwell.

6. Count each length you walk (if you have someone helping you to time the test, ask that person to count the lengths as you complete them too).
7. When the six minutes are up, measure your breathlessness using the BORG scale and write down the result. If you have an oxygen probe, measure and write down your oxygen level and heart rate in the table on the next page.
8. Now work out the distance you have walked by multiplying the number of lengths of your track completed by the track length:

For example:




Your walking track is eight metres long and you have completed 15 lengths.

Multiply $8 \times 15 = 120$. So, you have walked 120 metres in six minutes.

9. Write down these results in the table on the next page so you can share them with us at your appointment.

The Borg scale

The BORG scale is a simple way to measure how your breathing feels during exercise. The scale below ranges from 0 (no breathlessness) to 10 (maximum breathlessness). When exercising you should always aim to be moderately breathless which is 3 on the BORG scale. If you are too breathless to speak or cannot say more than one word at a time, you may want to slow down or take a short rest.

0	Nothing at all
0.5	Very, very slight (just noticeable)
1	Very slight
2	Slight (light)
3	Moderate
4	Somewhat severe
5	Severe (heavy)
6	
7	Very severe
8	
9	
10	Very, very severe

Six-minute walking test results

Write the results of your six-minute test down on the table below:

	Before you start (at rest)	At the end of the test
Oxygen level		
Heart rate		
Breathlessness		
Total distance walked		

Do not worry if you are unable to complete the walk test because you have joint pain or shortness of breath, for example. Just tell us during your video or phone appointment.

Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the pulmonary hypertension service staff caring for you:

Tel: 020 7351 8362 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)

More information

See a video about the six-minute walk test on the pulmonary hypertension page on Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals website:

www.rbht.nhs.uk/our-services/heart/pulmonary-hypertension-service/tests

If you need help or advice about any service or department at our hospitals, and feel unable to talk to those people responsible for your care, call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 020 7349 7715 or email pals@rbht.nhs.uk. This is a confidential service.

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