Sleep & Lung Care
RESPIRATORY & SLEEP PHYSICIANS
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Please read before your appointment
What happens, how to prepare and what to bring.

Your gas transfer test (TLCO)

Date: _____ Time: _____ Clinic: ☐ Epping ☐ Brunswick ☐ Doncaster East ☐ Braybrook ☐ Kilmore

The gas transfer test (TLCO, also called lung diffusion testing) measures how well your lungs pass oxygen from the air into the blood and carbon dioxide from the blood back into the lungs. It helps to diagnose conditions such as emphysema, interstitial lung disease (scarring of the lung), pulmonary embolism, pulmonary hypertension and sarcoidosis, and repeating it over time shows whether a known lung condition is improving or getting worse.

What happens during the test

- You breathe through a mouthpiece with a soft clip on your nose. After breathing out fully, you take a deep breath in of a test gas that contains a very small, harmless amount of carbon monoxide and a tracer gas (such as methane or helium).
- You hold your breath for about 10 seconds, then blow out quickly. The machine measures how much of the gas was taken up by your lungs during that breath.
- The measurement is repeated two or three times so the results are consistent. The test is painless and takes about 10–15 minutes. Spirometry and lung volumes are usually done at the same visit.
- Normal values depend on your age, sex, height and haemoglobin level, so your result is compared with the range expected for you and read together with your other tests.

Before your test

- Withhold your inhalers for the times in the table below — some medicines hide what the test is trying to measure.
- Bring all your inhalers and a list of your medicines and doses.
- No smoking or vaping for 1 hour, no alcohol for 8 hours, no vigorous exercise for 1 hour and no large meal for 2 hours before the test.
- If you are unwell on the day, call us before you come — the test may need to be rebooked.

On the day

- Wear loose, comfortable clothing.
- Bring your referral and Medicare card. Lung function tests are bulk billed with a current referral.
- Allow 45–90 minutes for your visit — most patients have more than one breathing test at the same appointment.

Do not stop a medicine you need to stay safe. If you need your reliever, take it and tell the scientist when you arrive — we can still test you or rebook. Unless your doctor or our reception team has told you otherwise, withhold the medicines below for the times shown; if you are unsure about any medicine, call (03) 9422 0077 before your appointment.

Medicines to withhold before the test

Medicine (examples)	Withhold for
Reliever puffers — salbutamol (Ventolin, Asmol, Airomir), terbutaline (Bricanyl)	4–6 hours
Ipratropium (Atrovent)	12 hours
Twice-daily long-acting and combination inhalers — Seretide, Symbicort, Flutiform, DuoResp, Fostair, Serevent, Oxis	24 hours
Once-daily long-acting inhalers (Breo Ellipta, Trelegy, Anoro, Ultibro, Spiolto, Onbrez, Striverdi), twice-daily triple-therapy inhalers (Trimbow, Breztri) and long-acting anticholinergics (Spiriva, Seebri, Incruse, Bretaris)	36–48 hours
Preventer-only inhaled steroid (Flixotide, Pulmicort, Qvar, Alvesco), montelukast (Singulair), antihistamines, theophylline (Nuelin)	Take as usual
Caffeine — coffee, tea, cola, energy drinks, chocolate	Avoid on the morning of the test

Your results

A respiratory scientist performs the tests and one of our respiratory physicians reports them. The report is sent to your referring doctor within two weeks. If your GP referred you for the tests only, your GP goes through the results with you (and can ask us for a consultation if the report recommends one); if you are already seeing one of our physicians, the results are discussed at your next appointment. If you have not heard from your doctor three weeks after the test, call (03) 9422 0077.

Cost, cancellations and questions

- Lung function tests are bulk billed with a valid referral — there is no charge for the test.
- To change or cancel your appointment, call (03) 9422 0077 during business hours (Monday to Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm). Please give at least 48 hours' notice.
- Arabic (العربية), Chinese (中文) and Vietnamese (Tiếng Việt) versions of these instructions are available from reception.
- Questions: (03) 9422 0077. Full guide online: **sleepandlungcare.com.au/our-service/tlco**

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