

*If you have
any questions
or concerns,
please talk
with the tech.*

Pulmonary Function Test (Full PFT)

A full pulmonary function test (PFT) is a group of tests that check lung function to determine:

- How easily air moves in and out of your lungs.
- The amount of air your lungs can hold.
- How much oxygen the lungs send to the heart.

A full PFT, done in the Pulmonary Function Lab, often includes these tests:

- Bronchodilator response
- Diffusing capacity (DLCO)
- Lung volumes
- Pulse oximetry
- Spirometry/flow volume loop lung

Please refer to the brochure titles as listed above for more details about these tests. The total testing time is about 30 to 60 minutes.

Before the Test

There is no special preparation for these tests. Bronchodilator inhalers (such as Albuterol®, Proventil®, Ventolin®, Combivent® or Maxair®) can affect the test results. **Unless you are having trouble breathing, do not use these inhalers for at least 4 hours before the exam.**

On the day of the test, plan to arrive 15 minutes before your test time. Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothes (nothing that would constrict your chest or make breathing difficult). If you wear glasses, hearing aids or dentures, please have them for the test. Also, be sure to bring:

- Your doctor's written order for the test (if one was given to you)
- A list of allergies
- A list of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter, and herbals)
- Photo ID
- Medical insurance information
- Medicare card (Medicare patients only)

Please come to the Galter Pavilion, 201 East Huron Street. Check in at the reception desk on the 8th floor.

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from the Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For discounted rates, please bring your parking ticket with you. Tickets can be validated at the Customer Services Desks on the 1st and 2nd floor of the Feinberg and Galter pavilions; 1st floor of Prentice (including the Prentice 24-hour desk near the Superior Street entrance).

Please tell the technologist (tech) if you have:

- Used an inhaler in the last 4 hours
- Claustrophobia (discomfort with closed-in spaces)

During the Test

Most of the tests are done in a glass-enclosed booth. You will be seated in a chair and a small plastic clip is placed on your nose. During the PFT, you will be asked to breathe into a filtered mouthpiece. The tech will give you specific instructions. It is important to keep a tight seal around the mouthpiece.

After the Test

You are free to leave as soon as the test is done. There are no diet or activity restrictions.

Initial test results are sent to your doctor within 48 hours. A full report follows in about 5 business days.

If you have questions about this test, please call the Pulmonary Function Lab at 312.926.3195.

Northwestern Medicine – Health Information Resources

For more information, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Alberto Culver Health Learning Center (HLC) at hlc@nm.org, or by calling 312.926.5465. Health information professionals can help you find the information you need and provide you with personal support at no charge.

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at nm.org.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363 or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363.

Developed by: NMH Pulmonary Function Lab