

**Patient  
Information**

# 'Fitness to Fly' assessment

## Introduction

You have been given this leaflet to provide you with more information about your 'Fitness to Fly' assessment.

## Why do you need an assessment?

The air we breathe at ground level contains 21% oxygen but when we travel by air this drops to 15%. If you suffer from lung disease this drop in oxygen may make you breathless or cause other problems which can be dangerous to your health. A flight assessment can help identify if you may develop such problems.

## What does the test involve?

The aim of the test is to create similar conditions to those on board an aircraft. To achieve this you will be asked to breathe a gas mixture which contains 15% oxygen for up to 20 minutes. During the test we will monitor your heart-rate and oxygen levels.

We will also take a small sample of blood from your earlobe to gain a more detailed picture of your oxygen levels after breathing the gas mixture.

If your oxygen levels drop during the test, some extra oxygen will be given to bring it up to normal levels. We can then decide if you would need to have extra oxygen during a flight and how much oxygen you would need.

The assessment also includes a lung function test where we will ask you to take a big breath in and blow the air out down a tube. This allows us to measure the airflow through your lungs to help your consultant decide how safe it is for you to fly.

## Before your test

- Continue taking all of your medication, including inhalers, as normal
- Please avoid eating a large meal for 2 hours before this test

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Department

Lung Function

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- Remove any nail varnish from your fingernails as we will need to put a probe on your finger to measure your blood oxygen levels
- If you have been prescribed oxygen at home to use for 15 hours or more a day please arrive on your oxygen if possible. You will need to wear it for 30 minutes before the test
- You are advised not to book or pay for any flights until you have had the results of this test

## Results

Your consultant will decide whether you will need to have extra oxygen during a flight. Please note we cannot give you these results on the day of your test. You will either receive the results at your next appointment with your respiratory consultant or they may write to your GP.

**Please allow 1 to 2 hours for this appointment**

## Contact information

If you have any further questions please telephone:

### Lung Function Department

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 6819

Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 5:30pm

Cheltenham General Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 4313

Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 5:30pm

## Further information

### Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Website: [www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/lung-function/](http://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/lung-function/)

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