

Community Respiratory Specialist Team

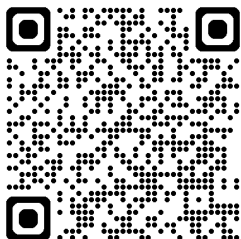
Blood Oxygen Testing



Information for patients, relatives, and carers.

Service Hours: 9am – 5pm

Telephone: 0300 124 5909



Service provided by

Sirona
care & health

Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to give you information about Blood Oxygen Assessment Testing. We hope it answers some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team. It aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below, please contact us.

What is a blood oxygen assessment?

A blood oxygen assessment is a blood test that measures the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your blood. These levels are tested so that oxygen can be prescribed safely and appropriately. This must be performed when your condition is stable, and you are not being treated for a chest infection. This is because oxygen levels can dip down during a chest infection, but unless your oxygen level stays low it is usually not necessary to have oxygen at home.

Therefore, if you are unwell leading up to the time of your appointment, please telephone the Respiratory Team as it may be necessary to rearrange your appointment.

Why am I having this test?

The purpose of the test is to assess your response to oxygen therapy and, if you need it, to determine the correct and safe dose for longer-term use. The blood samples are analysed for oxygen content, which shows how much oxygen is taken into the blood whilst breathing normal air and then after a period, breathing supplementary (extra) oxygen. It also measures how acidic your blood could be and indicates levels of carbon dioxide in the blood.

Why might I need oxygen therapy?

In some people with chronic lung disease one of the main problems can be the low level of oxygen in the blood, which can put the body under stress, particularly the heart and brain. By giving oxygen for at least 15 hours a day it has been proven to reduce this strain by increasing the amount of oxygen that these organs receive. This in turn helps people to live longer.

What will the test involve?

The blood test takes place whilst you are sitting comfortably, fully dressed, in a chair. There are two methods for obtaining a blood gas sample: one is from a blood vessel in your wrist and the other is from a blood vessel in your ear lobe. The evidence supports carrying out a blood gas sample from your artery as best practice but there may be reasons personal to you why this is not possible, and your earlobe will be used instead.

The sample is analysed, and results are available at the time of the assessment. If the oxygen levels are satisfactory, the test may stop there. Otherwise, you will be asked to breathe oxygen for up to 30 minutes. The oxygen is given through nasal cannula (small soft tubes placed just inside your nostrils). After this time, a second blood sample is taken and analysed.

Occasionally, a third sample may be needed after a further period of time on oxygen – this will be to ensure we prescribe you the correct amount of oxygen.

Will the test hurt?

This is a simple test. However, there may be some discomfort or sharpness when the blood is being taken. You may occasionally experience some bruising of the wrist area afterwards, but generally it should not cause you any problems. If you do have any worries about the test you can speak to the nurse/physio carrying it out who will be happy to discuss any concerns with you.

How should I prepare for the test?

The assessment may take anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours and we therefore recommend that you allocate sufficient time for this, and maybe bring a snack or a drink.

Please also remove any earrings prior to your visit to enable easy access to the earlobe. Please do not wear any nail varnish or false nails as they can affect signal quality and give inaccurate readings from the finger probe oximeter. Please ensure that you have been drinking plenty of fluids prior to the assessment.

Contact details:

Telephone: 0300 124 5909

Let us know what you think and get involved.

Telephone: 0300 124 5300*

Email: sirona.hello@nhs.net

Website: [Link to Sirona website \(sirona-cic.org.uk\)](http://sirona-cic.org.uk)

*Calls from landlines are charged up to 10p per minute; calls from mobiles vary, please check with your network provider. This is not a premium-rate number.

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