



*Better  
Together*

Patient information

Bronchial Challenge Test

Medical Directorate - Cardio Respiratory  
Department

Your Consultant / Doctor has advised you to have a Bronchial Challenge Test

### **What is a bronchial challenge test?**

This test assesses how your airways (the tubes leading to your lungs) respond to a stimulus, in this case Metacholine. Metacholine is a natural stimulus and when inhaled at high doses will cause the airways to constrict (tighten) causing shortness of breath, wheeze or cough.

This is a normal reaction, but when the airways constrict at lower doses it shows your airways are too responsive to a stimulus, and this may be the cause of your shortness of breath, wheeze or cough.

### **What are the benefits of having a bronchial challenge test?**

The aim of a bronchial challenge test is to find out if your airways are over sensitive to certain stimulus. This stimulus could be the cause of your asthma or cough.

### **What are the risks of having a bronchial challenge test?**

This is a safe procedure. However, as with many procedures, it does carry risks. There is a very small risk of anaphylactic shock (severe, sometimes life-threatening reaction). The staff will observe you closely during the test.

**If you have had a severe reaction to anything at all in the past, please inform the staff when you arrive.**

You will not be able to have this test if you have suffered a heart attack or stroke recently, or are pregnant or breastfeeding.

### **Are there any alternative investigations available?**

There is no alternative way of obtaining the information required from this test.

## **What will happen if I decide not to have this investigation?**

Your level of service will not be affected if you decide not to have the test. However, your doctor/consultant will not be able to obtain the necessary information that would have been gathered from performing the test.

## **Getting ready for your bronchial challenge test**

- Do not take any antihistamines for 48 hours before the test.

## **The day of your bronchial challenge test**

### **What happens during the test?**

You will be asked to inhale (breathe in) small amounts of metacholine through a nebuliser. The amount will be increased gradually throughout the test.

After each amount of metacholine, you will need to perform a short breathing test to measure your lung function, something that you have probably done before. This is continued until your breathing test results fall to a certain level, after which you will be given Ventolin through a nebuliser or MDI to dilate (open) your airways and your breathing test results will return to normal. The nebuliser will relieve any wheeziness, shortness of breath or chest tightness that you had during the test.

The test may last up to one and a half hours depending upon your reaction speed to the metacholine.

## **Going Home**

The staff will monitor you until you have recovered. You will then be allowed to leave the unit.

## **Returning to work**

You can return to your work straight after your appointment unless told otherwise on the day of your test.

## **Further Appointments**

Your consultant will give you the results at your next clinic appointment.

## **Further Information**

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