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Pulmonary Function Tests

What are PFTs?

Pulmonary function tests (PFTs) are noninvasive tests that show how well the lungs are working. The tests measure lung volume, capacity, rates of flow, and gas exchange. This includes how well you're able to breathe and how effective your lungs are able to bring oxygen to the rest of your body.

PFTs include **spirometry** which measures air flow resistance and compliance. This is done without and then with an inhaler which we call a bronchodilator.

Lung volume test to measure how much air your lungs can hold.

Lung diffusion capacity (DLCO) assesses how well oxygen gets into the blood from the air you breath.

Normal values vary from patient to patient. Your test results are compared to the average for someone of the same age, height, gender, and race,

Results are also compared to any of your previous test results.

Why are you doing PFTs?

There are many different reasons why PFTs may be done.

*If you're having trouble breathing

*If you have chronic lung conditions, such as asthma, bronchiectasis, emphysema, or chronic bronchitis

*If you have significant smoking history.

*If you have scoliosis, tumors, or inflammation or scarring of the lungs

*Prior to surgery or other procedures in patients who have lung or heart problems, smokers,

*If you have lung cancer or lung nodule

Certain things can make PFTs less accurate.

* The degree of patient cooperation and effort

*Use of medicines that open the airways

*Extreme tiredness or other conditions that affect a person's ability to do the tests.