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Information for Patients & Families

Diagnostic Sleep Test



This leaflet has been written to provide information about your sleep test. We hope it answers some of the questions or concerns you may have. It is not intended to replace talking with medical or clinical staff.

Why am I having this test?

Your GP or Consultant has requested this test following an appointment with you. You may have mentioned symptoms including daytime sleepiness or snoring; Alternatively someone in your household may have witnessed you holding your breath or making choking sounds while you are asleep. This test looks at different aspects of your breathing while you are asleep. It is primarily used to diagnose a sleep disorder called Obstructive Sleep Apnoea.

What is Obstructive Sleep Apnoea?

If you have Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) when you sleep the muscles in your throat supporting your tongue, tonsils and soft palate, relax and become floppy. This causes your airways to narrow or block. Narrow airways can cause noisy breathing and snoring and if the airway blocks completely an apnoea occurs, this is where you stop breathing. If an apnoea does occur, the body detects this and wakens you to a lighter stage of sleep to make the throat muscles contract and re-open the airway. This can happen throughout the night although you might not remember all these episodes of wakening. If your sleep is repeatedly interrupted you do not get any quality sleep and will wake up feeling tired and unrefreshed.

How long should I allow for this appointment? Please allow 20 - 40 minutes for your appointment.

What does the test involve?

The test will be explained to you in more detail when you come to your appointment. You are attending the hospital for an equipment fitting session where we will fit you with the monitoring equipment which you will need to wear while you are asleep. We will place bands around your chest and abdomen to measure movement; a finger probe is used to record your oxygen levels and heart rate; and small nasal prongs are used to monitor your breathing. The machine will be programmed to automatically switch on and off after we have checked everything is recording appropriately.

At the end of your appointment we will put the equipment back in its case for you to put on yourself at night when you get ready for bed. You will need to wear the equipment overnight and return it to our department the next day. The data recorded will be downloaded and checked to ensure there is enough data available for a report.

We will give you a sleep diary and short questionnaire to fill in at home that needs to be returned with the equipment. Every patient requires a blood sample.



How should I prepare for my test?

Please wear light comfortable clothing for your equipment fitting session.

Before attending for your appointment, please ensure that either yourself or somebody on your behalf can **bring the equipment back the following morning before 10.00am**. If the equipment is not returned on time we may need to cancel somebody else's appointment.

When you put the equipment on at home please wear your nightclothes and put the equipment on over the top. If you do not normally wear nightclothes please do so for the night of your test.

Please do not smoke while wearing the equipment.

Results

Please note that results will not be immediately available following your test. The report will be sent to either the Sleep Clinic consultant or the consultant who referred you for the test. We will advise you when you attend your equipment fitting session who you should contact regarding your results.