



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Attending for a CPET Test

(Cardio-Pulmonary Exercise Test)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:
Anaesthesia & Theatres Department
York: 01904 631313

Dear Patient, as part of your current treatment and assessment, your doctor has asked you to attend for a CPET test. These tests have been taking place in York for over ten years now, and are a standard part of our assessment process for certain patients. This information sheet will help you to understand what the test is for, what to expect, and how to arrive properly prepared.

Benefits of the Test

Completing a CPET will add a considerable amount of information for both the surgeon and anaesthetist on the potential risk to you of your operation. Your response to exercise plays a large part in determining how big a risk surgery is. By knowing the information from your test, we can inform you more accurately of the risks, and plan your management to make it as safe as possible.

Where will the test take place?

The tests take place at York Hospital – due to Covid the location of this test has unfortunately had to change on several occasions. Please see letter for current location. Please arrive here five to ten minutes before your appointment time. If you are driving to the hospital, you should be fine to drive yourself home following the test, after a short rest, but please allow yourself time to get parked.

When will the test take place?

Most tests are performed on Monday or Thursday. There are usually five or more tests conducted each session – we try to run the tests to as close to your appointment time as possible. You should expect to be in the test room or talking to the doctor afterwards for a total of about 45 minutes. Some patients being prepared for an operation may also have their pre-assessment interview with a nurse scheduled on the same day – this will take place on the same ward and may mean you stay longer – up to three hours in total.

What Should I Expect?

When you arrive, we will measure your height and weight, and note some details such as the medicines you have been prescribed. The aim of the test is to exercise your heart and lungs whilst closely monitoring their function. To do this we will first put some monitoring on you – a heart tracing (an ECG), and a blood pressure cuff on your arm. Then we place on either a nose clip and mouth piece or a soft face mask, to measure the gases you are breathing in and out. You will then be asked to sit on an exercise bicycle, and we will adjust it to fit you.

Once the details of the test have been explained to you, we will ask you to start pedalling. During this time, pedalling the cycle gradually needs more and more effort, so that we can assess how well your body responds. During the entire test there will be a consultant anaesthetist watching you closely.

Getting a good result from the test, involves you exercising to the point where you are getting out of breath. However, if at any time you feel you are unable to continue the test, you can of course tell us and simply stop pedalling.

Before I Attend

Please avoid drinking large amounts of alcohol in the 24 hours before your test. Please also avoid having a large breakfast on the day of your test, and avoid eating for two hours before the test – this will affect your metabolism and how well you can exercise. However, feel free to drink plenty of clear fluids.

Please bring the details of any medications you are taking. You do NOT need to stop any tablets before your test. If you take insulin for diabetes, please take your normal morning dose and the normal amount of food you would eat to go with this.

What Should I Wear?

Please wear comfortable loose clothes which you feel you can pedal in. T-shirt, jogging trousers and trainers are ideal – but avoid tight fitting items which restrict your legs moving. You will get warm during the test – we have fans and windows in the room.

Are There Any Risks?

All the CPET tests in York are carried out by a Consultant Anaesthetist or experienced physiologist, and they will be with you for the entire test. We have been conducting these tests in York for over ten years now, and have had no major problems in any of the several thousand patients. As we watch your heart very closely, and as we are aware of the changes we expect to occur, we can stop the test immediately you feel any problem, or we observe any changes in your heart or lungs.

When Will I Get The Test Results?

After the test is complete, and the monitoring has been taken off, you will have the opportunity to sit down and talk with the consultant running your session. A test is NOT a pass or fail test, but is one which helps us to assess the risks of surgery, and for some patients how well their current medications are working. This will be discussed with you at the completion of the test, when the doctor has had a chance to look at the information and data.

What Happens Next?

The consultant who ran your CPET test will write to the doctor who referred you detailing the results. The information will be used to decide the safest way to look after you when you have surgery – for example if you need to be looked after in the Intensive Care Unit after your operation. It may also be used to help decide the most appropriate operation for you to have.

If you already have a date for your operation, the results of the test will be made available to all the team looking after you.

For some patients we use the CPET test for assessing their heart function, and the test may mean we change some medicines, and possibly re-test after a few months.

As part of our work to both care for you and to improve the safety of our treatment, you may be asked to participate in one of the research projects which are currently under way. The results of your test may determine whether you are one of the patients we would like to study – if so we may talk to you about this after your test.

If you have a specific questions about the CPET test, or are unsure as to whether you should be attending, please contact one of the pre-assessment team.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Dr James Walkington, Consultant Anaesthetist, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE, telephone 01904 631313 or email j.walkington@nhs.net.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

Owner	Dr James Walkington, Consultant Anaesthetist
Date first issued	April 2012
Review Date	September 2029
Version	3 (reissued September 2026)
Approved by	Anaesthetics and Theatres Clinical Governance Group
Document Reference	PIL 724 v3.2

© 2026 York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.
All Rights reserved.