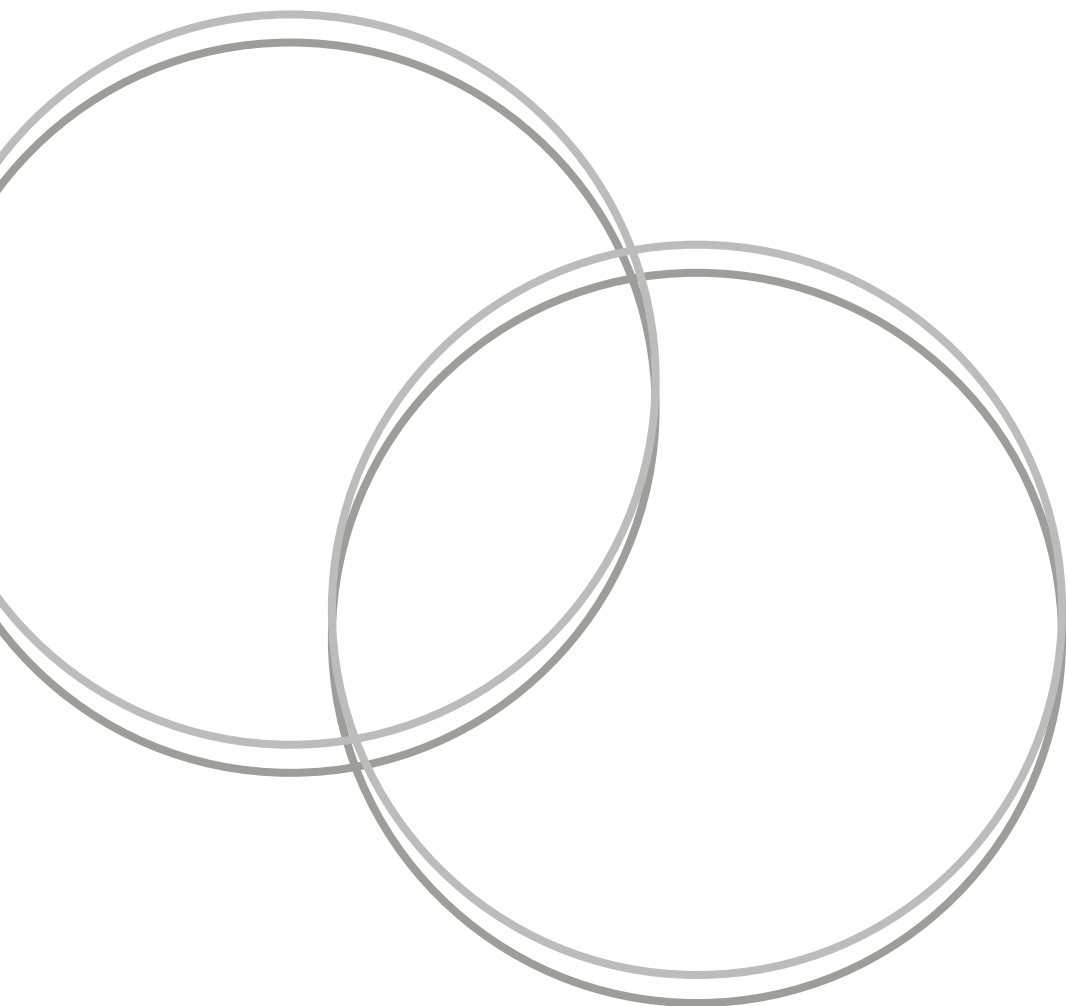




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Cardiopulmonary Exercise Test (CPET)

Information for patients



What is cardiopulmonary exercise test?

A cardiopulmonary exercise test (CPET) is a diagnostic test that assesses how your heart, lungs, and muscles respond to exercise. It helps doctors understand your body's response to physical activity, particularly in cases of unexplained breathlessness or an inability to exercise.



What happens on the day of the test?

Please arrive at least 10 minutes before the test. You will register at ECG reception on Level 2 of the John Radcliffe Hospital. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late, without a phone call to the department, we may have to cancel the test. This is because each test can take up to **1 hour** and risks delaying other patients.

This is a maximal effort test, so we want you to continue as long as possible. It is normal to be cycling for between eight to twelve minutes. The effort required gradually increases throughout the test. The team will explain the test in more detail on the day, and you will have an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

You will wear a comfortable, close-fitting silicon facemask with a breathing tube to allow the analysis of the gases that you breathe out. **The mask / tube will not restrict your breathing and you will breathe normally.** You will also have continuous electrical heart (ECG) monitoring. A small blood sample is needed from your finger (similar to blood sugar test) pre and post exercise. We will measure your oxygen saturation and blood pressure at least every 2 minutes.



Advice about your appointment:

- **DO NOT** use any moisturisers on the day of your appointment as they can affect the adhesives of the electrodes (stickers).
- **DO** bring an up-to-date list of your medications.
- **DO** let us know if you have any illnesses such as coughs, colds or joint pain that may affect your ability to perform a test or attend the appointment.
- **DO** wear comfortable shoes and loose-fitting clothing suitable for exercise e.g. trainers. Please do not wear high heels, flip flops or slip-on shoes.
- If you prefer a specific gender of staff to be present during the test, please contact the department with as much notice as possible and we will aim to accommodate your request wherever we can.

Friends and family will not be able to accompany you during the test unless you require additional support, but they may wait outside the room. Children/patients with additional needs may be accompanied by one parent/guardian.

Health conditions and medications

Please tell the cardiac physiologist about any conditions (temporary or permanent) that could affect your ability to move, walk, stand or keep your balance while exercising. If you're unable to cycle, please discuss this with the doctor that referred you, as the test may not be possible/appropriate in that case.

Before the test, please continue with your normal medication regime, unless otherwise stated by your doctor.

Are there any risks?

There is a very small chance of having an irregular heartbeat (called arrhythmia) or a heart attack. Your heart will be monitored closely throughout the test, and the staff are trained to manage heart emergencies if anything goes wrong. The test will be terminated if our team is concerned any abnormal changes to your heart rhythm or blood pressure.

When do I get the results?

The cardiac physiologist(s) will look at the data and produce a report. According to the test indication, the results will then be shared with your referring doctor or will be sent to our consultant cardiologist who will review and interpret the findings, which will then be passed to the referring doctor.

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions or concerns before your procedure, please telephone:

John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford

Telephone: **01865 220 258**

Horton General Hospital, Banbury

Telephone: **01295 229 099**

Email: ecg@ouh.nhs.uk

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Cardiac Services
February 2026
Review: February 2029
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



Making a difference across our hospitals

charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

OXFORD HOSPITALS CHARITY (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175809)

