

# Assessing your need for inflight oxygen during air travel

Respiratory Physiology Unit

Information for Patients

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## What is an inflight oxygen assessment?

Your doctor has asked that you have an inflight oxygen assessment. We will take 1 or 2 small blood tests from your earlobe. We take blood before and after you breathe in the same amount of oxygen you would normally get on a flight. The results of this testing will help your doctor understand whether you could fly safely without oxygen or whether oxygen would be needed.

## Why do I need it?

When flying at cruising altitude, the oxygen concentration falls from 20.9% (sea level) to 15%. In some patients this drop can cause the oxygen level in the blood to fall too low. This can bring on symptoms such as shortness of breath. The test results will help your doctor understand:

- If oxygen is needed during the flight.
- What flow rate is needed to make sure you have enough oxygen.

## What will happen at my appointment?

You will be seen by a specialist in lung function testing:

1. Once in the testing room, you will sit down and be asked a few questions to make sure it is safe to go ahead with the testing.
2. A blood sample will be taken from your earlobe. This will tell us whether or not you need oxygen during the flight. If your result is borderline, you will be asked to breathe 15% oxygen through an oxygen mask for 20 minutes.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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3. After 20 minutes, another blood test will be taken from your earlobe. This will show if in-flight oxygen is needed.
4. Once finished, you can leave the department and continue your day as normal. The report will be sent to your doctor.
5. Your doctor will then tell you the results either at an outpatients clinic, by phone or by letter.

## How long will the appointment take?

You will be in the department for up to 45 minutes

## Can I bring someone to the appointment with me?

- You can come to the appointment on your own.
- You may like to bring either a partner, relative or friend with you however we ask they remain in our waiting area whilst you are having your test.
- If you need your partner or relative to be with you during the test due to caring needs please let the person doing your test know.

## Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns before your appointment or need an interpreter, please contact the department on 01162583420. You can also use this number to rebook or cancel your appointment.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
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