



Infant lung function tests with chloral hydrate

This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) explains about lung function tests with chloral hydrate – a short acting sedative. We use chloral hydrate routinely without any complications. This sedative helps your child sleep during the lung function test measurements.

What do I need to do before coming to GOSH for my infant's lung function test?

It is important that your child does not eat or drink anything for a few hours before the sedation. This is called 'fasting' or 'nil by mouth'. Fasting reduces the small risk of stomach contents entering the lungs during and after the procedure. Your appointment letter will give you the specific fasting times, so please read this carefully.

It is equally important to keep giving your child food and drink until those times to ensure they remain well-hydrated and receive adequate nutrition. This may involve waking your child earlier than normal to give them a drink which we recommend. If your child is found to be unwell on clinical examination, it may be decided that it is unsafe to sedate them and the procedure will have to be postponed and re-booked for another day.

Will my child be given any medication before the procedure?

Your child will be given chloral hydrate, a short acting sedative, to help them into a deeper sleep during the lung function test. Please let us know if your child has any allergies so that we can check to make sure that the medicine is safe to give. This medicine usually works within 10 to 30 minutes.

Are there any side effects associated with the medication?

Side effects are uncommon however it is still important to be aware of them.

- ④ Rash
- ④ Headache
- ④ Nausea and vomiting
- ④ Tummy upset (feeling bloated, passing wind)

What will happen during the procedure?

During the procedure, your child will be asleep while we measure their lung function. Throughout the test we will monitor their oxygen saturations and heart rate.

What happens after the procedure?

After the procedure your child will be awake but may remain drowsy for a few hours as the effects of the medicine wear off. You should not leave your child alone during this time as they will be unsteady on their feet.

You can call us on 020 7405 9200 ext. 5456 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm) in case you have any questions or concerns after arriving home. We will also call you the day after the procedure just to check that your child is well and back to their normal self.

When will we find out about the result of the test?

The lung function results will be discussed with you at your next clinic appointment. If we have any concerns we will contact you sooner.