



This handout will help you learn more about your 6 Minute Walk Test; how to get ready and what to expect during and after the test.

What is a 6 Minute Walk Test (6MWT)?

A 6 Minute Walk Test is used to find out how much you are able to exercise. The test will measure how far you can walk on a flat surface in 6 minutes.

Why is this test done?

The 6MWT is done to help your doctor understand your body's response to exercise. The results can be used to adjust your current treatment plan or to plan an exercise program for you. You will do this test 2 times –at the start of your 8 week rehab program and again at the end.

Who will do the test?

The test will be done by a Physiotherapist or Respiratory Therapist.

Where will the test be done?

- Check-in at the Information Desk near the main entrance **15 minutes** before your appointment time.
- Bring your BC Care Card with you.
- You will be directed to where the test will be done. If you cannot walk a long distance, wheelchairs are available.
- Check in with the clerk when you get there.

How long will the test take?

30 minutes.

Are there any risks with this test?

There are few risks to this test. This is because you will decide how fast you walk depending on your ability. Changes in blood pressure, heart rate, and fainting can happen, and in very rare cases, heart attack or stroke. Trained staff and emergency equipment are available if any of these things happen.

How do I get ready for the test?

- Wear comfortable clothing and walking shoes. Avoid restrictive clothing.
- Use your usual walking aids during the test (cane, walker, oxygen etc.).
- Take your medications as usual unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
- Eat a light meal before early morning or early afternoon tests.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol and nicotine within 3 hours of the test.
- Avoid heavy exercise within 2 hours of the test.

Where will I park?

Park in any visitor parking at the location of your test.

How is the test done?

- Someone will be with you at all times during the test. You will be told what to do and how to do it right.

- You will walk back and forth in a hallway on a marked course for 6 minutes. You will walk at your regular walking pace. Pivot briskly around the cones and walk back the other way. Do not jog or run.
- The staff member will keep track of the number of laps you do. Remember that the object is to walk as far as you can for 6 minutes. The distance you can go will depend on your fitness level.
- 6 minutes is a long time to walk. You may get tired or out of breath. You can slow down, stop, and rest as needed. You may rest against the wall, but carry on walking as soon as you can.
- The test may be stopped if:
 - You ask to stop for any reason e.g. you feel exhausted or are having any discomfort.
 - The staff member sees a change that is concerning e.g. weakness, severe shortness of breath.

Your results

- The person who did the test will talk to you about your results. We can use the results to compare your fitness level before and after your rehabilitation program.

For non-emergency health information and services:

HealthLinkBC - Health advice you can trust 24/7.

Tel: 8.1.1 from anywhere in BC.

Tel: 7.1.1 for deaf and hearing-impaired assistance (TTY)

Web: www.HealthLinkBC.ca

The information in this handout is intended only for the person it was given to by the health care team. It does not replace the advice or directions given to you by your doctor.