

## What is a six minute walk test?

A six minute walk test is done in children older than 4 years of age to measure exercise ability. It tells your child's doctor:

- How far your child can walk within 6 minutes.
- How your child feels while walking.

During the test, a member of the care team will ask your child if they feel out of breath, tired or dizzy.

If your child already has a medical problem, it can also help measure:

- How bad the problem is.
- How well treatment is working.

Before, during and after walking, the care team measures your child's:

- Oxygen level
- Heart rate (number of times their heart beats in 1 minute)
- Blood pressure

These results help the care team know how well your child's body responds to exercise.

## What should I do to help my child prepare?

- Have your child wear comfortable rubber sole shoes like tennis shoes.
- Tell your child about the test 1 to 2 days ahead of time. Tell the truth when you answer their questions.
- Use simple words to explain what the test will be like.
  - They will walk for 6 minutes back and forth in the hallway.
  - They should walk as long as they can. Let them know not to worry if they need to slow down and rest during the test.
  - The test does not hurt.
  - It will take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete.
- Your child can eat and drink like normal before and after the test.

## What will the test be like?

The technologist will talk with your child about the test before it begins. The care team will check your child's:

- Heart rate and blood pressure at the start and end of the test.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

# Six minute walk test, continued

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- Oxygen level while they walk and after the 6 minutes are over.
  - To check your child’s oxygen level, a member of the care team will wrap a small, soft probe around your child’s finger.
  - It should not hurt.

You may watch your child walking in the hallway, but you cannot walk with them.

## What happens after the test?

When the test is over, you and your child can return to the waiting room. The doctor will review the test results and then talk with you about them.

## Does my child need follow-up care?

Your child's doctor will let you know if or when your child may need to repeat the test.

Please let your child’s doctor or technologist know if you have any questions or concerns.

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child’s doctor or a member of your child’s healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

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