

Sleep study

Information for patients

This sheet answers common questions about having a sleep study. If you would like further information, or have any particular worries, please do not hesitate to ask your nurse or doctor.

What is a sleep study?

A sleep study is carried out in order to make an overnight recording of your sleep pattern. This is done by monitoring your:

- oxygen levels by attaching a small clip to your finger
- breathing by attaching a small sensor on your nose
- chest and abdomen movement by using small sensors which are held in place by Velcro belts.

Some of you may have a simpler study with just a watch attached to your wrist and a small probe over the finger.

A sleep study may be requested to help detect sleep problems, which can cause excessive daytime sleepiness (such as obstructive sleep apnoea) or muscular disorders.

Where will I have my sleep study?

You will have your sleep study at home. This is because most people sleep better in the comfort of their own bed rather than in a hospital ward.

What do I have to do?

If you are asked to attend hospital for your sleep study you may be asked to attend a separate appointment for a COVID-19 testing swab. This will take place before your sleep study.

If you come to the hospital for your sleep study, you are advised to wear a vest or a t-shirt which you can later sleep in.

Do not wear nail varnish or acrylic nails on the day of your sleep study. This is because both can affect the ability of the sensor to accurately measure your blood oxygen level.

The physiologist will attach the monitor and sensors over your vest/t-shirt. You will then go home and you will be able to go to sleep at your normal time.

Please keep the monitor dry at all times. In the morning, you will be able to remove it and place all parts in the bag which will be provided – please do not throw any parts away. It is important that you return the monitor before 10.30am the next morning so that it is available for another patient.

Please note: If you are issued with the sleep monitor on a Friday, you will need to return it on the following Monday as we are closed over the weekend.

If you can have the study using a wrist watch and finger probe, the equipment for this may be delivered to you by a courier. In this case, you will be contacted by a member of the team who will explain how the equipment will be delivered to you and the sleep study process.

What will happen to the results of my sleep study?

A member of the sleep and ventilation team will look at and review the results of your sleep study. You will also have been asked to complete one of our sleep disorders questionnaires. The results of your tests and questionnaire will be reviewed and discussed by the sleep and ventilation team. If these show there are no problems, and that no further investigations or treatment are needed, you will be contacted via letter to notify you of this. At this point you will be discharged from the sleep and ventilation service.

If the tests and questionnaire results indicate you need further tests or treatment, you will be contacted via letter or telephone. Sometimes we offer patients an appointment to start treatment based on their test results before they have seen a doctor. We think this approach offers our patients the best care possible.

Please make sure you complete the sleep disorder questionnaire and return it with the study. It is important that you return the questionnaire as it will help to guide decisions about your care.

Further information

If you have any questions, or any other concerns, please contact us during office hours on 020 7794 0500 ext 22466 or speak to the physiologist on the day of your test.

More information

For more information about the lung function service] at the Royal Free London, please visit our website: www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/respiratory-medicine

Your feedback

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email: rf.communications@nhs.net

Alternative formats

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please speak to a member of staff.

© Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust

Service: Respiratory medicine

Version number: 2

First approved: November 2017

Approval date: April 2021

Review date: April 2023

www.royalfree.nhs.uk