



Sniff Test (Chest Fluoroscopy)

How to prepare for your exam

A sniff test allows your doctor to see if your diaphragm moves in the proper direction.

Read this handout to learn how the exam works, how it is performed, how to prepare for the exam, what to expect during the exam, and how to get your results.

What is a sniff test (chest fluoroscopy)?

The sniff test is a fluoroscopic exam used to check how the *diaphragm* (the muscle that controls breathing) moves during activities such as breathing normally and inhaling rapidly.

Your diaphragm normally moves down when you inhale, and up when you exhale. Both the right and left sides of your diaphragm should move in the right direction at the same time.

During the sniff test, the radiologist will observe how your diaphragm moves. You will be asked to "sniff" or quickly breathe in through your nose. An injury or abnormality resulting in paralysis of the *phrenic* nerve (the nerve responsible for diaphragmatic motion) can be detected in this manner.

How should I prepare?

No preparation is needed.

How is the examination performed?

Small amounts of X-rays are passed through the body. When a special X-ray detector is exposed to the absorbed X-rays, a detailed picture of the diaphragm is captured.

The radiologist or technologist will have you sniff or quickly breathe in through your nose and then take pictures of your diaphragm.

The procedure takes about 15 minutes.

What will I feel during the examination?

This exam is painless.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Radiology staff are also available to help at any time.

Imaging
Services/Radiology:
206-598-6200

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A radiologist trained to interpret sniff tests will review the pictures and send a report to your doctor, who will give you your test results. The radiologist will not discuss the results with you. Based on the findings, you and your primary care doctor will decide the next step, such as treatment for a problem, as needed.

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