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Spirometry Test Expectations for DOT Drivers

1. What is a Spirometry Test?

Spirometry is a type of non-invasive procedure to test your pulmonary function. Basically, it measures how well your lungs work and how much oxygen you move when you breathe. This is important for drivers because low lung function can lead to shortness of breath, fatigue, and daytime drowsiness and make it unsafe for drivers to operate a motor vehicle.



2. Who Needs to Take a Spirometry Test?

Drivers with a history of smoking or occupational lung exposures (such as diesel exhaust, silica dust, welding fumes, or asbestos) might be asked to take a test to measure their lung capacity and assess any lung damage. A spirometry test allows your doctor to accurately evaluate your lungs and breathing and make the appropriate treatment recommendations to keep you safe and on the road.

3. Taking a Spirometry Test

To ensure an accurate spirometry test, wear loose-fitting clothing, avoid tight waistbands or belts, and avoid eating a large meal beforehand. Additionally, avoid smoking, drinking alcohol, or engaging in strenuous exercise 24 hours prior to the test. If you have chest pain, recently had a stroke or heart attack, undergone abdominal surgery, or have a collapsed lung, you should not take the test.



4. What Does a Spirometry Test Mean for Your DOT Medical Certificate?

A spirometry test requested by a doctor does not automatically disqualify you from passing your DOT medical exam. Many individuals with lung or breathing conditions can still drive commercially, but it's essential to diagnose and treat any issues to ensure safety. If a pulmonologist identifies conditions like asthma, sleep apnea, COPD, or pulmonary fibrosis, they will recommend further testing and treatment to ensure you're fit for duty.