

Specialty Examination – RESPIRATORY

In instances when a Specialty Examination is requested, the Contractor shall provide the DDDS and its DDDS claimants with the following, in addition to, the Adult General Medical Disability Evaluation and Report Guidelines.

The examination should concentrate on the areas affected by the DDDS claimant's illness or impairment. Provide specific information and be as descriptive as possible.

(1) Respiratory Examination.

- (a) Current Medical History. Describe and discuss the DDDS claimant's:
 - i. Dyspnea at rest and/or with exertion
 - ii. How much activity causes dyspnea (i.e. how far can the DDDS claimant walk before resting and how many flights of stairs can they climb before resting)
 - (A) Presence of any associated symptoms (i.e. palpitations, wheezing, cough, sputum production, chest discomfort, symptoms of hyperventilation, paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea, or orthopnea)
 - iii. Palpitations, wheezing, cough, sputum production, chest discomfort, paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea, and orthopnea
 - iv. Characteristics of severe respiratory attack(s) or persistent pulmonary infection
 - v. History of hospital admissions or emergency department visits
 - vi. Episodic disorders (i.e. asthma)
 - (A) Onset and precipitating factors
 - (B) Frequency and intensity
 - (C) Duration
 - (D) Mode of treatment and response
 - (E) Compliance with therapy including frequency of inhaler use
 - (F) Description of a severe attack
- (b) Social History. Report any employment history relevant to the disease (i.e. exposure to fibrotic agents, chemicals, irritants, etc.)
- (c) Physical Exam. Describe and discuss, as appropriate:
 - i. Presence of tracheostomy, central venous catheter, or gastrostomy
 - ii. Presence of or need for supplemental oxygen
 - (A) How often does the DDDS claimant use it (i.e. all the time, with exercise, at night, etc.)
 - iii. Respiratory rate:
 - (A) Whether labored or unlabored
 - (B) If there is use of accessory muscles or respiration
- (d) Lungs. Describe and discuss:
 - i. Occurrence of cough, audible wheezing, pallor cyanosis, hoarseness, clubbing of fingers, chest wall deformity, curvature of the spine, etc.
 - ii. Whether there is prolongation of the exhalatory phase of respiration
 - iii. Quality of breath sounds (air exchange). Normal or diminished.
 - iv. Presence of adventitious sounds (i.e. wheezing, rhonchi or rales)
 - v. Diaphragmatic motion
- (e) Heart and Vascular. Describe and discuss:
 - i. Heart sounds
 - ii. Presence of any lifts, heaves, or thrills
 - iii. Heart size
 - iv. Point of maximal impact of cardiac apex
 - v. Presence of any murmurs, rubs, or gallops
 - vi. Presence and location of any bruits

- vii. Distention of neck veins
- viii. Presence, type, and extent of any peripheral edema and any associated skin discoloration or ulceration
- (f) Additional Information – Pulmonary Function Tests
 - i. Spirometry: Perform as specified in section 3.00E of the List of Impairments (see <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/3.00-Respiratory-Adult.htm>)
 - ii. Diffusing capacity of the lungs (DLCO) test: Perform as specified in section 3.00F of the List of Impairments (see <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/3.00-Respiratory-Adult.htm>)
 - iii. Arterial blood gas (ABG) test: Perform as specified in section 3.00G of the List of Impairments (see <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/3.00-Respiratory-Adult.htm>)
 - iv. Pulse oximetry: Perform as specified in section 3.00H of the List of Impairments (see <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/3.00-Respiratory-Adult.htm>)
 - v. Reported findings for pulmonary function tests must meet the requirements of Section 3.00E of the List of Impairments (see <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/3.00-Respiratory-Adult.htm>)
 - vi. Statement should be made regarding the DDDS claimant's ability to understand the directions, as well as, the effort and cooperation in performing the pulmonary function test.