

DOT Physical Tips

The best way to pass your physical is to take the time and make the daily effort to stay healthy!

The DOT physical examination is mandated by the Department Of Transportation to assure your safety and the safety of all people on the highways. Some may feel it is an inconvenience and for others it can be a major hurdle. Here are some suggestions to make your next physical less stressful and faster.

GENERAL TIPS:

- Keep an eye on the expiration date of your Driver's Certificate. Don't wait until the last minute for your physical in case further medical information must be obtained. Schedule your appointment at least 10 days prior to the expiration.

TAKE YOUR PAPERWORK:

- Gather any medical reports or documents that might be helpful.

Medications: Take a list of all medications you take, both over the counter and Prescription, including the name, dose and how often you take it.

Diabetics: Take a copy of your blood sugar results or the hemoglobin A1C (a blood test that shows your average blood sugar level over the past 3 months). If it is consistently between 8 and 10* also bring information from your physician providing details of his/her treatment and level of control of blood glucose levels and symptoms along with a statement from the treating physician regarding your ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle.

Heart Problems: Take a copy of your last stress test report and a letter of recommendation from your heart doctor.

Sleep Apnea: Take a copy of your last sleep study and/or a copy of the CPAP compliance data for the last 90 days. (This must show a 70% compliance.)

Glasses: If you wear glasses please take them with you to your appointment.

Questions?? If you are unsure of what reports or documents to take with you, please call the office **before** your appointment.

DOT Tips (continued)

UNUSUAL OR SPECIAL MEDICAL CONDITION

- If you have any unusual or special medical condition keep a copy of your records with you. This will help the process go more smoothly for you. An explanation from your doctor about your condition and what effect it has may influence if you will pass and how quickly your certification can be completed. This also will keep you prepared if your physical is scheduled with little notice.
- If you have a medical waiver from DOT, keep a copy of that with you so you can show the medical examiner.

BLOOD PRESSURE:

- **Salt:** Since salt may increase blood pressure and DOT has strict guidelines, beginning a week before your physical, cut down on your salt intake. This will help stabilize your blood pressure rather than make it abnormally high. Avoid salty foods (potato chips, pretzels, french fries, etc) and do not add salt to your food.
- **Caffeine & Smoking:** Cutting back can also help improve your blood pressure. Don't drink caffeine or smoke a cigarette just before your physical. They can immediately raise your blood pressure!
- **Medications:** If you take blood pressure medicine, be sure you don't run out and remember to take it when you are supposed to. If you forget, or are late taking your medicine, try to reschedule or delay your physical until you have taken it and given it time to work. If you cannot reschedule, be sure to tell the medical examiner.

VISION: The DOT standard for vision is a least 20/40 in each eye with or without glasses. If you wear glasses or feel your vision is declining, go to your provider before your DOT physical to have your vision checked and glasses updated to meet the standard.

SICK: If you are more than a little sick the day of your physical, try to reschedule rather than taking a risk of disqualification. Example, if you have a full blown case of the flu with coughing, fever, chills etc., ask your supervisor to delay the physical until you are feeling better.

SLEEP APNEA: Physical Findings that suggest a possible sleep disorder include obesity (ie" body mass index ≥ 35) and increased neck circumference (≥ 17 " in men, ≥ 16 " in women). Physical findings at the time of your certification exam may require that you obtain a sleep evaluation to determine if you have sleep apnea. If this becomes necessary, you will be given a temporary certification for a limited time during which you must complete the sleep evaluation.

DOT Tips (continued)

The examiner's responsibility is to assess your overall ability to meet the rigorous physical, mental and emotional demands of a commercial motor vehicle operator in accordance with sound medical judgment and DOT regulations. Although following these suggestions will not guarantee you will meet the DOT requirements, coming to your physical with the appropriate documentation will speed up the qualification process for you and your employer.

Remember – the best way to pass your physical is to take the time and make the daily effort to stay healthy!!