

This leaflet has been written to provide information about a basic breathing test (Spirometry). We hope it answers some of the questions or concerns you may have. It is not intended to replace talking with your Doctor or Nurse.

What is Spirometry?

Spirometry is a basic breathing test which measures the amount of air you can breathe in and then blow out forcefully. Your G.P/ Nurse has requested this test to assess your lung function.

How is the test performed?

The person performing the test will measure your height and weight and then ask you to sit upright in a chair next to the device. You will be asked to take a deep breath in and blow into the Spirometer as hard and fast as you can until your lungs are completely empty. This routine will be repeated several times to ensure the results are consistent.

Reversibility Test.

Depending on your results you may be given an inhaler (bronchodilator) which will open up your airways to their best possible. The person performing the test will demonstrate how to use the inhaler via a spacer. You will then have the test repeated 20 minutes later to see if there is any improvement. During the 20-minute interval you will be asked to sit and wait in the waiting area.

Will I feel any pain or discomfort?

The test is not painful but can feel a little uncomfortable. Some patients experience light-headedness. You will be encouraged to do your best and will be given time between each blow, but you must inform them if it is causing you to feel unwell.

How long will the test take?

The initial part of the test takes approximately 30 mins, if reversibility is then required you will have the 20 minutes interval whilst the inhaler takes effect and then another 10mins of testing.

How should I prepare for spirometry?

If you are already taking regular inhalers or medication for your breathing, please bring them to your appointment but we ask that you **do not use them if possible**, for the time specified below:

<i>Medication</i>	<i>Withholding times</i>
Relievers – SABA (e.g. Salbutamol, Terbutaline)	4-6 hrs
Relievers – SAMA (e.g. Atrovent)	12 hrs
Preventers – LABA (e.g. Salmeterol/Formoterol/Seretide/Symbicort/Fostair)	24 hrs
Preventers – Ultra-LABA (e.g. Onbrez/Relvar/Anoro/Striverdi)	36 hrs
Preventers – LAMA (e.g. Spriva/Incruse/Eklira/Braltus/Tiotropium)	36-48 hrs
Long-acting oral bronchodilators (e.g. Theophylline tablets)	24 hrs

If you feel breathless and need to use any of these inhalers within the times above, please inform the person performing the test at the start of your appointment.

Other Instructions:

- Please **do** take all of your other medications as normal.
- Please **do** bring any inhalers you have to the appointment.
- Please **do not** smoke in the 24 hours before the test.
- Please **do not** drink alcohol on the day of the test.
- Please **do not** have caffeine e.g tea/coffee in the 4 hours before the test.
- Please **avoid** eating a large meal 2 hours before the test.
- Please **avoid** vigorous exercise in the last 30 minutes.
- Please wear non-restrictive, comfortable clothing.

For your comfort, please empty your bladder just before your appointment.

If on the date of your test you have a chest infection, please ring the surgery to cancel & re-book the appointment when you have been well for **at least 6 weeks**. A chest infection and / or oral steroids will affect your test and give your G.P/ Nurse invalid results.

What are the benefits of having spirometry?

The results of the test will greatly benefit your G.P/ Nurse when diagnosing problems with your breathing or when monitoring an existing respiratory condition.

What are the risks involved?

The procedure is performed frequently at the surgery and is very low risk. However, because the test requires **MAXIMUM EFFORT** it is important to ensure that it is suitable for you (see possible contraindications below).

You may feel light-headed after each attempt at the test but this should only last a few seconds. Occasionally some patients feel shaky after they have had the inhaler, this is also normal and should only last for a short time.

Rarer complications include fainting, due to the forced nature of the test, and nausea

What can I expect after the test and when can I resume normal activities?

After the test and appointment with the Nurse is over, you can go home and resume your normal activities straight away. You should not experience any lasting effects from the test. You should resume taking your inhalers as normal.

When do I get the results?

The person performing the test will not be able to give you any results at the appointment. They will ask you to make a follow up appointment with the GP/ Nurse that referred you.

What if I have concerns/queries before the test?

Please feel free to phone the surgery and they will arrange for you to speak to the Nurse who specialises in Spirometry and who will be able to address any questions you may have.