

# Spirometry testing (A)

## Respiratory Physiology Patient information

**This leaflet is for patients attending for spirometry tests. These are sometimes also called lung function tests, respiratory functions tests, or breathing tests.**

Your doctor or specialist nurse has asked that you perform some spirometry testing.

### What is a spirometry test?

A spirometry test is a breathing test that aims to investigate how much air you can blow out and how fast you can do so. It aims to identify any narrowing within the airways and any reduction in lung size. It helps doctors diagnose any lung complaints, to see which treatment is most appropriate for you. If you are waiting for an operation, your surgeon may have asked for this test as part of pre-assessment.

### What does the test involve?

You will be asked to perform a breathing manoeuvre into a hand-held device while sat in a chair. This may include being asked to fill and empty your lungs both quickly and in a relaxed manner. As part of the testing, you may also be asked to use an inhaler. The physiologist will give you clear instructions before and during the test. This is a non-invasive test so you should not feel any pain while performing it, or afterwards. The test does require a lot of effort, so you may feel a little tired. You will be fine to drive afterwards if necessary. Depending on which tests are needed, your appointment will usually last between 15 and 45 minutes, although occasionally it may take longer.

### How should I prepare for the test?

Please contact the Poole department on **0300 019 8352** (Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5pm) or the Royal Bournemouth department on **0300 019 4564** (Monday to Friday 8.30 am 4pm) before coming in for your appointment, if any of the following apply to you, as this may impact the safety of testing:

- If you have coughed up any blood (haemoptysis) in the last two months
- If you have suspected/confirmed tuberculosis
- If you have had chest/eye/stomach surgery in the last two months
- If you have had an invasive heart procedure in the last month
- If you have had a blood clot in the last two months
- If you have had a stroke in the last two months
- If you have certain types of blood vessel problems (e.g. aortic or cerebral aneurysms)

- If you have had a heart attack, angina, or uncontrolled blood pressure in the last month
- If you have had a recent chest infection (in the last two weeks) which has required antibiotic and/or steroid treatment
- If you have had a collapsed lung/recent rib fracture in the last two months
- If you have current or recent (in the last month) symptoms of Covid-19 such as: new continuous cough/fever/change to taste and smell
- If you have had recent (in the last week) symptoms of diarrhoea/vomiting/nausea

## On the day of your appointment please follow these instructions:

- Continue to use all medication as normal. Please bring your inhalers to the appointment (if applicable) and inform the physiologist if you have taken them before the test.
- Avoid vigorous exercise immediately before testing.
- Avoid smoking an hour before the test. This is to maintain the accuracy of the results.
- If you feel the journey to your appointment may make you breathless, please aim to arrive 10 minutes early to allow yourself time to recover.
- Don't eat a very large meal within two hours of the test (light meals are fine). Do not consume alcohol within four hours of the appointment. This is to avoid discomfort during testing and ensure accuracy of results.
- Wear loose comfortable clothing that doesn't restrict your breathing, as well as footwear that is easy to remove and put back on.

## Contact details

### Respiratory physiology:

Poole Hospital **0300 019 8352**

Royal Bournemouth Hospital **0300 019 4564**

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