

Downend Health Group

DHG Patient Guide To Spirometry

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What is a Spirometer and Spirometry?

A Spirometer is a device which measures the amount of air that you can blow out. There are various Spirometer devices made by different companies, but they all measure the same thing. They all have a mouthpiece that you use to blow into the device. A Doctor or Nurse may ask you to blow into a Spirometer if you have chest or lung symptoms - this test is called Spirometry.

How is the test done?

You breathe in fully and then seal your lips around the mouthpiece of the Spirometer, you then blow out as fast and as far as you can until your lungs are completely empty. This can take several seconds. You may also be asked to breathe in fully and then breathe out slowly as far as you can. A clip may be put on your nose to make sure that no air escapes from your nose. The above routine may be done two or three times to check that the readings are much the same each time you blow into the machine.

Reversibility Testing

Reversibility Testing is done in some cases where the diagnosis is not clear. For this test you will be asked to do the Spirometry Test as described above then you will be given a medicine by inhaler or nebuliser which may 'open up' the airways. The Spirometry test is then repeated 15 minutes or so afterwards. The aim of this is to see if your airways open wider with medication or not.

When Attending for your Spirometry Test please:

- Do not smoke for 24 hours before the test
- Undertake no vigorous exercise before the test
- Avoid eating a large meal before the test
- Avoid alcohol for 4 hours before test
- **Stop** using your BLUE inhaler (short acting inhaler) for 4 hours prior to testing unless necessary
- **Stop** using long acting inhalers for 12 hours before the test unless necessary

In the following situations we will not be able to perform the test and will need to ask you to reschedule your appointment:

- If you have had a **chest infection** in the past **6 weeks**
- If you have undergone **eye surgery** in the past **4 weeks**
- If you have undergone **abdominal surgery** in the past **4 weeks**
- If you have undergone **surgery for an aortic aneurysm** in the past **4 weeks**
- If you have suffered a **stroke** in the past **4 weeks**
- If you have suffered a **heart attack** in the past **4 weeks**