

Highfield Surgery

Spirometry Patient Information Leaflet

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 can use to blow into a 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

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 30 minutes or so afterwards.

The aim of this test is to see if your airways open wider with medication or not.

When attending for your Spirometry Test please avoid the following:

- Smoking for 24 hours prior to your appointment
- Vigorous exercise 30 minutes prior to you appointment
- Eating a substantial meal 2 hours prior to your appointment
- Using a short acting inhaler, (blur inhaler) unless necessary 4 hours prior to your appointment
- Using a long acting inhaler 12 hours prior to your appointment
- Drinking alcohol 4 hours prior to your appointment

The Spirometry Test should not be carried out if you are on antibiotics or you have had any of the following:

- Current chest infection
- Unstable angina within 72 hours
- Uncontrolled Hypertension
- Aneurysm
- Pulmonary Embolus (PE) within 8 weeks
- Stroke within 3 months
- Eye, Thoracic or abdominal surgery within 3 months
- Heart Attack within 2 months
- If you are coughing up blood
- Pneumothorax within 8 weeks
- Glaucoma

If you have any questions or concerns please ask to speak to the practice nurse or doctor.

Please wear comfortable non-restrictive clothing for this test. Wear dentures if required. Please aim to be early for this appointment as you will need to be seated for 10 minutes to settle any exertion breathlessness.