

PCN3 Spirometry leaflet

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 clinician.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire prior to attending for your Spirometry appointment.

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 GP practice has requested this test to assess your lung function following your recent visit.

How is the test performed?

The healthcare professional 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 your airways to their best possible. The technician will demonstrate how to use the inhaler via a spacer. You will then have the test repeated 15 minutes later to see if there is any improvement. During the 15 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 the technician if it is causing you to feel unwell.

How long will the test take?

Please arrive 10 minutes early for the appointment so that you can complete the [mandatory pre-spirometry questionnaire](#). The initial part of the test takes approximately 15 minutes, if reversibility is then required you will have the 15 minutes interval whilst the inhaler takes effect and then another 15 minutes of testing. Please ensure that you are available for an hour from your appointment start time so that all necessary testing can be completed.

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)	6 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 technician 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 you have a chest infection on the date of your test, 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 invalid results.

What are the benefits of having spirometry?

The results of the test will greatly benefit your G.P/Practice 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.

If you have any of the following, please inform the technician prior to starting the test.

- Uncontrolled high blood pressure
- Uncontrolled angina
- An ear infection
- Coughed up blood recently and the cause is unknown
- A heart attack or stroke
- Any chest, abdominal or cerebral aneurysms
- A collapsed lung (pneumothorax)
- Any operations (including chest, abdominal or eye surgery)

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 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 healthcare professional performing the test will not be able to give you any results at the appointment. The results will be sent directly to your practice who should have advised you regarding follow up.

What if I have concerns/queries before the test?

Please feel free to contact your GP surgery to address any further questions you may have.