

# Having a spirometry and sputum test to check lung function

Respiratory Physiology Unit

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Information for Patients

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## What is spirometry and sputum testing?

Your doctor has asked you to have a spirometry and mucus (sputum) test. You will make a number of fast blows on a machine. You will also produce a sputum sample for analysis. The results we get from this test will help your doctor find out how well your lungs are working and if you have any swelling (inflammation) in your airways.

## Why do I need it?

Spirometry is done for various reasons. It helps your doctor to find out why you may be having symptoms such as shortness of breath as well as to find out and check how well some treatments work. The results of these tests can help to find out if your:

- airways are narrowing.
- lungs are smaller than we would expect them to be.

Sputum testing is done to find out if you have a higher than normal level of inflammatory cells in your sputum. High levels can help the doctor to diagnose and monitor respiratory conditions such as asthma.

## What will happen at my appointment?

You will be seen by a specialist in lung function testing:

1. You will have your height and weight measured.
2. We will ask you to sit down and ask you a few questions to make sure it is safe to do the test.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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3. You will be asked to do a number of fast blows into a machine.
4. If your doctor has asked, you may need to repeat the fast blowing test after you have taken an inhaler which we will provide. This is to find out if this medication helps. Your appointment letter will say if this test will be needed during your visit.
5. You will then be asked to try and cough up a sputum sample in to a small pot. If you are not able to produce a sample, we may ask you to breathe in a saline spray to help loosen your chest. This will make it easier to cough up a sample.
6. After the end of the test you can leave the department and continue your day as normal.
7. A report will be sent to your doctor.
8. The doctor will talk to you about the results at an outpatients clinic, by phone or by letter.

## How long will the appointment take?

You will be in the department for up to 45 minutes.

## Can I bring someone to the appointment with me?

- You can come to the appointment on your own.
- You may like to bring either a partner, relative or friend with you, however we ask they remain in our waiting area whilst you are having your test.
- If you need your partner or relative to be with you during the test due to caring needs, please let the person doing your test know.

## Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns before your appointment or need an interpreter, please contact the department on **0116 258 3420**. You can also use this number to rebook or cancel your appointment.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
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