

Spirometry and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD): Testing Your Lung Function

WHAT IS SPIROMETRY?

If your healthcare professional thinks you may have COPD, he or she may recommend a test called spirometry. Spirometry is a common test that measures the function of your lungs. It is also called a pulmonary function test.

WHAT DOES SPIROMETRY DO?

- Measures the amount of air you can breathe out over a certain amount of time
- Lets your healthcare professional check how well your lungs are working

WHY CAN SPIROMETRY BE USEFUL FOR YOU?

A spirometry test

- Helps your healthcare professional tell if you have COPD
- Shows how severe your COPD is
- Helps your healthcare professional decide what medicines and other health instructions to give you
- Shows you and your healthcare professional how well your medicine and the other ways that you manage your COPD are working



How a Spirometry Test Works

WHAT HAPPENS IN A SPIROMETRY TEST?

A spirometry test measures your lung function. It shows how much air your lungs can hold and how quickly you can breathe out all of the air.

- Your healthcare professional will show you how it works
- He or she will ask you to take a big breath and then blow into a tube as fast as you can. You may be asked to wear a nose clip to prevent air from leaking
- Keep blowing out until your healthcare professional tells you to stop
- That's it!

After the test, ask your healthcare professional to explain the results to you.

ASK YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL ABOUT SPIROMETRY



What are the important measurements (scores) in a spirometry test?

- How much air you breathe out in 1 second (forced expiratory volume in 1 second or FEV₁)
- How much air you breathe out in 1 breath (forced vital capacity or FVC)
- The ratio, which is the relationship between FEV₁ and FVC (FEV₁/FVC)

What do the spirometry scores mean?

- You have abnormal lung function if you have an FEV₁/FVC of less than 70%
- If you have been diagnosed with COPD, your healthcare professional
 - Will find out how severe your disease is
 - May compare your spirometry scores with other tests that you may have had previously
 - May give you follow-up spirometry tests to see if the treatment plan is helping your lung function