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Spirometry measures volume and flow of air coming out of our lungs using a spirometer. The information that spirometry provides helps to:

- Assess how much we breathe out and how the air comes out and helps diagnose and monitor lung conditions The tests may take 15– 45 minutes to perform.

The test will be performed with you. You will be asked to breathe normally into a mouthpiece and instructed to take a deep breath in and then to blow out and keep blowing until your lungs are empty. This will be performed a minimum of three times, and if performing gentle blows to a minimum of six times. You will be given adequate rest between each blow. Spirometry may then be repeated after you have been given short-acting bronchodilator inhaler through a spacer device. This will be to see if there is any improvement in your airways as a result of taking this medication.

You will also be advised:

- Not to wear tight clothing for your appointment as this constricts your lungs.
- Not to smoke for at least 1 hour before your appointment
- Not to take vigorous exercise, 30 minutes before your appointment
- Not to have a heavy meal up to 2 hours prior to your appointment
- Not to consume alcohol for a minimum of 4 hours

There are some reasons when spirometry cannot/may not be performed. These include:

- Recent cardiovascular event (within 1 month), Recent Myocardial Infarction, Unstable Angina, pulmonary embolus
- Uncontrolled hypertension or cerebrovascular event
- Recent Abdominal or Thoracic Surgery
- Recent Eye Surgery
- Pneumothorax
- Known or suspected respiratory infection
- Nausea, vomiting or pain
- Confusion or dementia
- Haemoptysis (coughing up blood) of unknown cause