Spirometry is only one way of interpreting severity of any possible COPD diagnosis. We also take into account your level of breathlessness and how much this limits you day to day, along with the number of chest infections you may have had in the last year.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding this appointment, or cannot make the given time or day, please do not hesitate to contact our office on the number provided.

**Sharing your information**
Your information will only be disclosed to those who have a genuine need to know and who agree to keep your information confidential. For your direct care we often share information with:
- NHS hospitals and clinics
- GPs
- Social care

**Who to contact**
Community Respiratory Team

t: 01634 382860

Unit 7-8 Ambley Green, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 0NJ

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Medway Community Healthcare provides a wide range of high quality community health services for Medway residents; from community nurses and health visitors to speech and language therapists and out of hours urgent care.

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**Customer care**
Please send any comments about Medway Community Healthcare services to:

- Customer care coordinator
Medway Community Healthcare
MCH House, Bailey Drive, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 0PZ
t: 01634 334650
medwaycustomercare@nhs.net

All contact will be treated confidentially

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This information can be made available in other formats and languages. Please contact:
medch.communications@nhs.net

Leaflet reference: MCH 372.3
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 medical or nursing staff.

What is Spirometry?
Spirometry is a basic breathing test which measures the amount of air that you can blow out. Your clinician has requested this test to assess your lung function. It can provide information that can indicate how easily your lungs fill with air and how narrow your airways are.

Below is an image of what the device may look like.

How is it done?
The clinician performing the test will measure your height and ask your weight, it would be helpful if you could weigh yourself once in the days before the appointment. They will then ask you to sit in a comfortable upright position. You will be asked to take a deep breath in and blow into the Spirometer for as long as possible at a steady rate, until your lungs are completely empty. You will then 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. These two manoeuvres will be repeated 2-3 times each to ensure the results are accurate.

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 as much as you can and given time to recover between blows.

How long will the test take?
The test will take approximately 20 minutes.

How should I prepare for spirometry?
Please bring all your inhalers to your appointment.

Please take your inhalers as normal on the day of the appointment.

- Do not conduct vigorous exercise in the 30 minutes prior
- do take all of your other medications as normal
- do not smoke in the 24 hours before the test

- do not drink alcohol on the day of the test
- avoid eating a large meal two hours before the test
- wear non-restrictive comfortable clothing

If on the date of your test you have a chest infection, for which you are taking antibiotics, or have had one requiring treatment in the last 6 weeks, please ring the office to inform us on the number provided. A chest infection will affect your test and give invalid results, unless your clinician has said you are an exception.

What are the benefits of having spirometry?
Your clinician will use the results of the test to help them diagnose problems with your breathing or monitor existing breathing conditions.

What are the risks involved?
The procedure is very low risk however; you should tell the clinician if you have any of the following:

- coughed up blood in the last three months and the cause is not known
- pneumothorax
- any thoracic, abdominal or cerebral aneurysms (bleeds)
- had a heart attack within the last three months
- uncontrolled angina

- had a stroke in the last three months
- had any eye surgery in the last three months
- had any thoracic or abdominal surgery in the last three months
- had lung surgery or bleeding ears in the last six months

Some of the general risks associated with the procedure are outlined below; individual patients however may have a greater risk of some or all of the complications

- you may feel light-headed after each attempt at the test but this will only last a few seconds.

Rarer complications include:
- Fainting due to the forced nature of the test
- 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 continue taking your inhalers as normal.

When do I get the results?
The results will not always be available on the day of your test, and on occasion there will be little change from your last spirometry. In which case there is no need to contact us. However, if there is a concern or a change of treatment is required as a result we will contact you by telephone to inform and keep your GP up to date in writing.