

Spirometry - What to Expect

What is spirometry testing and why do I need it?

Spirometry is a test of how well your child's lungs work. The test is carried out using a machine called a spirometer. Spirometry is needed to diagnose and assess your child's lung condition so he or she can be given the right treatment. Your doctor can also use the test results to find out how severe your child's lung condition is and help set their treatment goals.

What happens in a spirometry test?

The spirometer measures how much air your child can breathe into their lungs and how much air he or she can quickly blow out of their lungs. This test is done by having your child take in a deep breath and then, as fast as he can, blow out all of the air. He will be blowing into a tube connected to a machine (spirometer). To get the "best" test result, the test is repeated three times. Your child will be given a rest between tests. The test is often repeated after giving your child a breathing medicine (bronchodilator) to find out how much better your child might breathe with this type of medicine. It can take practice to be able to do spirometry well. The medical assistant will work with your child to learn how to do the test correctly. It usually takes 30 minutes to complete this test.

What should I bring?

If your child has been previously prescribed an inhaler, please bring it with you to your child's spirometry appointment. You should also bring your child's spacer (aerochamber) with you. This medication may be used during your child's spirometry test.

After the test

Your child can return to their normal activities. Some people find it hard to do the test, so your child may feel tired afterwards. Your doctor will discuss the results of your test afterwards or at a future appointment.

Is there any risk in having spirometry?

Spirometry is a very low risk test. Your child may feel dizzy during the test or shortly afterward.