

*If you have
any questions
or concerns,
please talk
with the tech.*

Spirometry (Flow Volume Loop)

A spirometry test is done to check lung function. It measures how quickly and completely air can be forcefully exhaled from your lungs. This test uses a filtered mouthpiece attached to a spirometer, which measures the airway flow.

This test, done in the Pulmonary Function Lab, takes about 30 minutes. This test may be done alone or as part of a full pulmonary function test (PFT). A PFT can take up to 60 minutes.

Before the Test

There is no special preparation for this test. Bronchodilator inhalers (such as Albuterol®, Proventil®, Ventolin®, Combivent®, or Maxair®) can affect the test results. **Unless you are having trouble breathing, do not use these inhalers for at least 4 hours before the exam.**

On the day of the test, plan to arrive 15 minutes before your test time. Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothes that will not constrict your chest or make breathing difficult. If you wear glasses, hearing aids or dentures, please have them for the test.

Be sure to bring:

- Your doctor's written order for the test.
- A list of allergies.
- A list of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter, and herbals).
- Photo ID.
- Medical insurance information.
- Medicare card (Medicare patients only).

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from the Feinberg and Galter pavilions.

For discounted rates, please bring your parking ticket with you. Tickets can be validated at the Customer Services Desks on the 1st and 2nd floor of the Feinberg and Galter pavilions; 1st floor of Prentice (including the Prentice 24-hour desk near the Superior entrance).

Please tell the technologist (tech) if you have:

- Used an inhaler in the last 4 hours.
- Claustrophobia (discomfort with closed-in spaces).

During the Test

The test will be done in a glass-enclosed booth called a body plethysmograph. You will be seated in a chair and a small plastic clip will be placed on your nose. You will be asked to inhale and exhale forcefully into a filtered mouthpiece. It is important to keep a tight seal around the mouthpiece.

After the Test

You are free to leave as soon as the test is done. There are no diet or activity restrictions.

Initial test results will be sent to your doctor within 48 hours. A full report will follow in about 5 business days.

If you have questions about this test, please call the Pulmonary Function Lab at 312-926-3195.

Health Information Resources

For more information, visit Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Alberto Culver Health Learning Center. This state-of-the-art health library is located on the 3rd floor of the Galter Pavilion. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Center by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to hlc@nm.org.

For additional information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at nm.org.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312-926-3112.

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Patient Representatives Department at 312-926-3112, TDD/TTY 312-944-2358 and/or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312-926-1920, TDD/TTY 312-695-3661.

Developed by: Pulmonary Function Lab

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For additional information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at nm.org.
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