

# SPIROMETRY INTERPRETATION HELP SHEET 1

**STEP 1** Is it an accurate spirometry; Check details, reproducibility and for any errors

**STEP 2** Is there obstruction? Look at the ratio

Is FEV1/FVC < 0.7 (70%)?  
*(If FEV1/VC is smaller then use this value)*

NO

Not obstructed  
Look at the other chart

YES

**STEP 3** Why is it obstructed? Look at reversibility

Is it asthma (reversible) or COPD (fixed):

1. Look at history
2. Do PEFr chart or reversibility

Is there evidence of reversibility?

YES

Asthma

NO

COPD

**STEP 4** How severe is the COPD? Look at FEV1% predicted

FEV1 ≥ 80%: Mild COPD  
 FEV1: 50 – 79%: Moderate COPD  
 FEV1: 30 – 49%: Severe COPD  
 FEV1 < 30%: Very Severe COPD



**STEP 5** Is there any restriction? Look at FVC % predicted (or the VC whichever is larger)

FVC % predicted < 80	FVC predicted % > 80
COMBINED OBSTRUCTION AND RESTRICTION	Pure OBSTRUCTION

If combine restriction and obstruction it maybe either:

1. Short blow – look at technique
2. Obstruction + obesity – look at BMI
3. Severe COPD
4. Obstruction + true restrictive disorder

If unsure:

- > Look at history and examination
- > Order CXR
- > Order full lung function tests

