

Why use a peak flow meter?

- Using a peak flow meter will help you and your doctor treat your asthma. **A peak flow meter is easy to use. It is best to use the same peak flow meter at the same time each day.**

Using your peak flow meter every day will:

- Help you prevent asthma attacks
- Help you learn what triggers your asthma
- Tell you when your asthma is under control
- Tell you when to call your doctor or seek medical help.



Health Center

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**Use a Peak Flow
Meter to Manage
your Asthma**



What is a peak flow meter?

A peak flow meter is a tool. It tells how well you are breathing. Just like you use a thermometer to check fever, you can use a peak flow meter to check breathing. It may be used at your doctor's office to check your asthma control. But you can use the peak flow meter at home, too.

What is a good number or reading?

Your doctor may ask you to keep a peak flow diary. The diary is often kept for two weeks to learn your best reading. Your asthma should be in control during this time. Your diary will let your doctor know your **personal best peak flow number**.

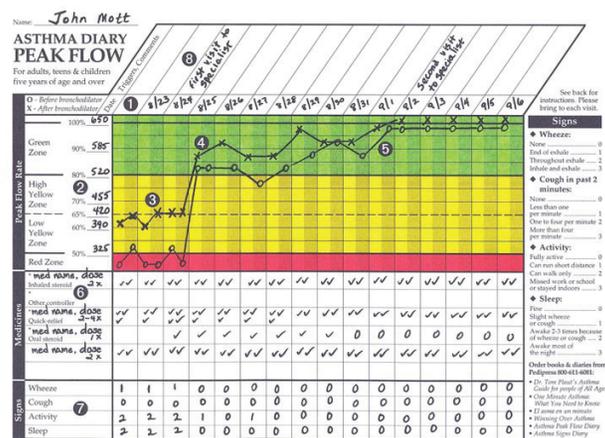
How to use the peak flow meter?

Have a pen and paper ready or your peak flow diary. Stand up straight.

1. Breathe with your mouth open. Breathe in and out with easy breaths. Then breathe in as much air as you can –a deep breath. Blow it out and then repeat. These are practice breaths.
2. Move the pointer on the peak flow meter to as low as it will go.
3. Take a deep breath.
4. Put the mouthpiece flat on your tongue. Close your lips tightly around the mouthpiece. Then blow out as fast and hard as possible. You should not lean forward while blowing out.
5. Find the number at the spot on the meter where the pointer stopped. This is the peak flow reading.
6. Move the pointer back to the lowest number.
7. Wait 15 seconds.
8. Do this 2 more times.

Write down the highest of the 3 numbers on your diary for that day.

SAMPLE DIARY:



What does the peak flow number mean?

Using your personal best peak flow number your doctor will write an **asthma action plan**. Your asthma plan has **3 zones –green, yellow, and red**. The colors can be set on your peak flow meter. These colors match the traffic light colors and mean the same thing as driving a car up to a traffic light.

1. Green zone means all is clear. Your asthma is under control. At a green traffic light your car can go.

2. Yellow zone means “be careful.” Your asthma may not be under control. You need to take quick-relief medicine (such as Albuterol). You should get away from the trigger if possible. Your doctor will tell you what other steps to take to get you back into the green zone. At a yellow traffic light your car must slow down and be alert.

3. Red zone means danger! You need quick relief medicine right away. Get away from any asthma trigger. Follow your written asthma action plan. Call your doctor! Your doctor may write down more steps to take. If you do not have an asthma plan or you cannot reach your doctor get medical help right away!!! Adults do die from asthma!

