

Peak Flow Meters

For children and families

What is a peak flow meter?

A peak flow meter measures how well you are breathing. It is something you blow into that lets you know how much air is moving in and out of your lungs.

- “Peak” means the most.
- “Flow” means amount you can breathe out.
- “Meter” means something that measures.

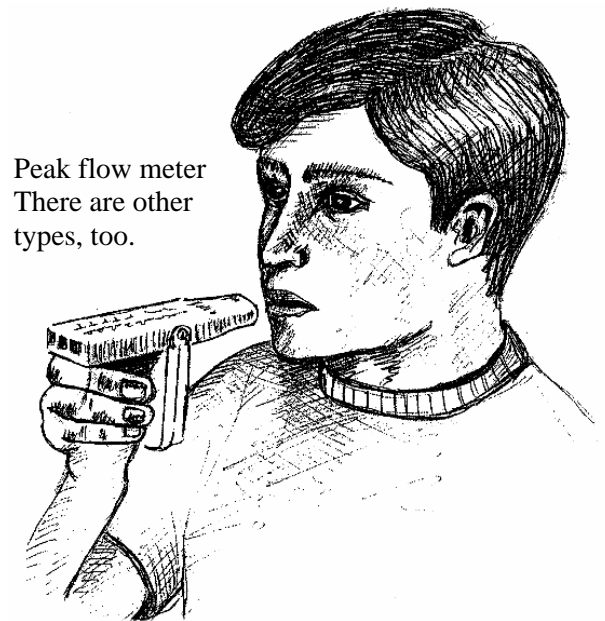
Why do I need it?

You may know the signs when your asthma is getting worse. But sometimes it’s hard to know how bad your asthma really is. The peak flow meter gives you a number that lets you know how well you are breathing. You can tell your health care provider the number you got and how you are feeling. Your health care provider will know whether or not to change your medicine.

How do I use it?

It is easy!

1. Set the arrow at zero.
2. Stand up.
3. Take everything out of your mouth, such as gum.
4. Take a deep breath in.
5. Close your lips tight around the tube and blow one hard, quick breath into the mouthpiece. It’s important to blow your hardest.



Peak flow meter
There are other
types, too.

Continued

Check your peak flow numbers two times every day for at least two weeks. Here's how:

1. Blow into your peak flow meter like you've learned.
2. Look at the number by the arrow and write the number down on a piece of paper.
3. Blow two more times into the mouthpiece and write those numbers down.
4. Circle the highest of the three numbers. Write the highest number in the Peak Flow Calendar below. That's your first "number of the day."
5. Do this twice a day—every morning at the same time and every night at the same time—for at least two weeks. Checking your numbers for a month is even better.

Peak Flow Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____
Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____
Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____
Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____	Morning _____
Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____	Night _____

Continued

Figure out your yellow zone

6. Now that you have your green zone and red zone scores, you can figure out your yellow zone. The yellow zone peak flow scores are less than 80 percent (green zone) and more than 50 percent (red zone). They are the scores in the middle. Be sure that you have a yellow zone plan. Know what medicines to take.

Your health care provider will make an asthma management plan with you and your family. This way, you will know what to do if you are in the yellow or red zone. Your health care provider may want you to change how much medicine you take or the type of medicine you take.

Yellow Zone Score Example	Your Yellow Zone Score
80% score: 240	Your 80% score:
50% score: 150	Your 80% score:
Yellow zone: 240-150	Your yellow zone:

What do I do with my scores?

Take your scores to your health care provider. You can write down your scores here:

Green zone scores:

Yellow zone scores:

Red zone scores:

This handout has been reviewed by community and Children’s Hospital health care providers. However, your child’s needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child’s health care provider. Adapted from Living with Asthma, Children’s Hospital and Regional Medical Center. Thanks to Laura Castello, illustrator, and Neal Starkman, writer, Flashpoint Development.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Pulmonary Medicine, (206) 987-2174
- Your Child’s Health Care Provider
- Center for Children with Special Needs Web site at www.cshcn.org
- Children’s Resource Line (206) 987-2500 or (866) 987-2500 toll-free Washington, Alaska, Montana, Idaho, or www.seattlechildrens.org

Children’s will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call Marketing Communications at (206) 987-5205.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children’s Hospital. However, your child’s needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child’s health care provider.

