

Using a Peak Flow Meter

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- **A peak flow meter lets you know if your asthma is getting better or worse.**

A peak flow meter is like a thermometer for your lungs.

It measures the airflow out of your lungs. Children as young as 3 have been able to use the meter to help control their asthma. Peak flow meter numbers can help you and your doctor:

- Choose when to add or change medicine
- Choose how well the medicine is working
- Choose when to get emergency care
- Spot triggers that cause asthma symptoms

A peak flow meter lets you know if your asthma is getting better or worse.

- A peak flow meter can let you know when your asthma is getting worse before you have symptoms.
- But first you have to know what your normal peak flow is.
- Normal is different for every one.
- A normal peak flow for a toddler is less than a normal peak flow for a teenager.
- For this reason, it is important for you to use your peak flow meter often to find your own “personal best” peak flow.
- Talk to your doctor to learn more about peak flows.

To use a peak flow meter:

1. Stand up
2. Place the arrow at the bottom of the numbers.
3. Take a deep breath, place the mouthpiece between your teeth, and close your lips tightly around the mouthpiece. Do not block the opening with your tongue!
4. Exhale hard and fast into meter to move the indicator.
5. Read the number at the position of the indicator.
6. Repeat one or two more times to get an accurate reading.
7. Clean the mouthpiece.

To find a personal best peak flow reading:

- Record peak flows readings twice a day for 2 weeks.
- Ignore numbers that seem really high or low.
- Do this when your asthma is under control and not when you are sick.
- The highest reading over a 2-week period is your personal best.

80-100% of personal best: asthma is under control

50-80% of personal best: Caution. Follow instructions on asthma control plan

50% or below personal best: Take rescue medications and call doctor at once!

