

## Why use a peak flow meter?

- Using a peak flow meter will help you and your doctor treat your child's 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 your child prevent asthma attacks
  - Help you learn what triggers your child's asthma
  - Tell you when your child's asthma is under control
  - Tell you when to call your child's doctor or get medical help.



Health Center

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**Use a Peak Flow  
Meter to Manage  
your Child's Asthma**



### What is a peak flow meter?

A peak flow meter is a tool. It tells how well your child is 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 child's asthma control. But you can use the peak flow meter at home, too. Your child's school nurse may use a peak flow meter if your child has asthma problems at school.

## What is a good number or reading?

Your child's doctor may ask you to keep a peak flow diary for your child. The diary is often kept for 2 weeks to learn your child's best reading. Your child's asthma should be in control during this time. Your child's diary will let your doctor know your child's **personal best peak flow number**.

## How to use the peak flow meter?

Have a pen and paper ready or your child's peak flow diary. Tell your child to stand.

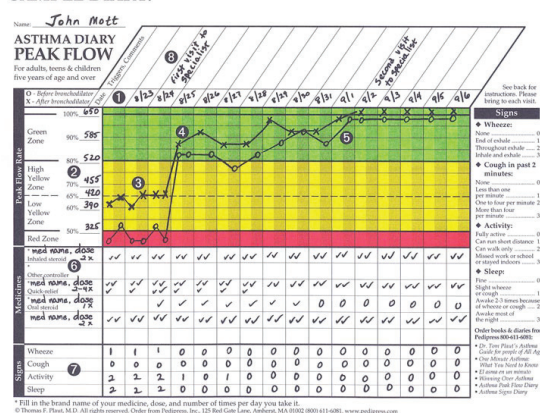
1. Have your child breathe with their mouth open. Tell them to breathe in and out with easy breaths. Then have your child breathe in as much air as they can –a deep breath. Blow it out and then repeat. These are practice breaths.
2. Move the pointer on the peak flow meter to 0.
3. Tell your child to take a deep breath.
4. Put the mouthpiece flat on your child's tongue. Have your child close their lips tightly around the mouthpiece. Then tell your child to blow out as fast and hard as possible. Your child 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 0.

7. Wait 15 seconds.

8. Do this 2 more times. Write down the highest of the 3 numbers on your child's diary for that day.

SAMPLE DIARY:



## What does the peak flow number mean?

Using your child's personal best peak flow number your doctor will write an **asthma action plan**. Your child's asthma plan has **3 zones –green, yellow, and red**. The colors can be set on your child's 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 child's asthma is under control. At a green traffic light your car can go.
2. Yellow zone means "be careful." Your child's asthma may not be under control. Your child needs to take quick-relief medicine (such as Albuterol). And, your child should get away from the trigger. Your doctor will tell you what other steps to take to get your child back into the green zone. At a yellow traffic light your car must slow down and be alert.
3. Red zone means danger! Your child needs quick relief medicine right away. Get away from any asthma trigger. Follow your child's written asthma action plan. Call your child's doctor! Your child's doctor may write down more steps to take. If your child does not have an asthma plan or you cannot reach your child's doctor get medical help right away!!! **Children do die from asthma!**

