



What is a Peak Flow Meter?

A peak flow meter is a tool for asthma management that measures how well air is moving in and out of the lungs.

It can show a problem even before a person feels any asthma symptoms or has trouble breathing.

A peak flow meter can help you:

- Identify asthma triggers
- Monitor treatment program
- Know when to use quick-relief medicine
- Know when to call the doctor
- Know when to go to the emergency room

What are peak flow zones?


Peak flow zones are based on the individual's personal best peak flow number. The zones help check asthma and signal when to take the appropriate actions to keep it controlled. Use the colors of a traffic light to learn about asthma.

- **Green means Go** – *"I feel good"*
- **Yellow means Caution** – *"I do not feel good"*
- **Red means Stop** – *"I feel awful"*

Green means Go

"I feel good"

The Green Zone signals good control.



Take usual daily long-term control medicines, if any. Keep taking these medications, even if in the yellow or red zones.

Yellow means Caution

"I do not feel good"

The Yellow Zone signals caution: asthma is getting worse.




Add quick-relief medicines. Might need to increase other asthma medicines, as directed by a doctor.

Red means Stop

"I feel awful"

The Red Zone signals medical alert!



Add or increase quick-relief medicines and call a doctor immediately.



How to use a peak flow meter

1. Look at the front of the peak flow meter. Notice the numbers and marker.
2. Move the marker to zero or the bottom of the scale.
3. Stand up straight.
4. Take a deep breath.
5. Put the mouthpiece of the meter in mouth. Close lips tightly around it. Keep fingers away from the numbered scale.
6. Blow as hard and as fast as possible into the mouthpiece.
7. Take the meter out of the mouth.
8. The marker will have moved up the numbered scale. Write down the number on a piece of paper.
9. Set the marker back to zero or bottom of the scale.
10. Repeat the steps above two or three times. The highest number is the best peak flow number.



What is an asthma action plan?

A written action plan, developed jointly by the health care provider and the patient, will help the patient manage his or her asthma.

All Asthma Action Plans should have the following components:

- Recommended doses and frequencies of daily medications
- Symptoms that need close monitoring or acute care
- Emergency telephone numbers
- A list of triggers

