

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Peak Flow Meter

The Early Warning System

What is a peak flow meter?

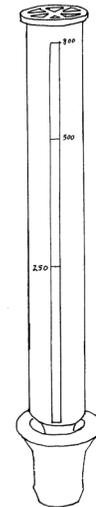
A peak flow meter is one of the tools used to manage asthma. It fits in your hand. It may be made of metal or plastic.

What does a peak flow meter do?

A peak flow meter measures the amount of air that can be blown quickly out of the lungs.

Why use a peak flow meter?

- It will show an asthma attack is beginning, even before there is coughing or wheezing.
- It can show you how well the asthma medicines are working.
- It can help you decide if your child is well enough to go to school or play sports.
- When you are not with your child, it can help a grandparent, school nurse or babysitter tell you about your child's asthma.



A peak flow meter measures the amount of air that can be blown quickly out of the lungs.

How do you use a peak flow meter?

- Check a peak flow twice a day, in the morning and after school.
 - Check a peak flow before using medicine.
1. Stand up.
 2. Set the arrow on the meter to "0" (zero).
 3. Take a deep breath.

4. Place your lips tightly around the mouth piece.
5. Blow hard and fast.
6. Write down the number next to the arrow, so you don't forget it.
7. Repeat steps 2 to 6 two more times.
8. Decide which of the three numbers is highest.
Write the highest number on your **Peak Flow Record** or **Asthma Diary**.



Blow hard and fast.

Helpful Hints:

- Look for any sign of an asthma attack. The peak flow meter is only one way to measure asthma. Peak flow numbers may drop when there are no other warning signs of an asthma attack. Or, your child may cough or wheeze, while the peak flow numbers stay the same.
- Make sure your child is blowing the right way. Your child may learn how to cheat.
 - By blowing through the tongue, you can get higher numbers.
 - By not blowing as hard as possible, you can get lower numbers.

How do I use the peak flow numbers to help my child?

The doctors and nurses will write an **Asthma Action Plan** for your child. It will set up zones based on your child's peak flow numbers. The zones are named like the colors on a traffic light: green, yellow and red. The numbers will change as your child grows.

Now that you've read this:

- Have your child show the nurse, doctor, or respiratory therapist how to use the peak flow meter. (Check when done.)
- Tell your nurse, doctor, or respiratory therapist how you would use the peak flow numbers with the Asthma Action Plan. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,
 call your child's doctor or call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
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