

# Peak Flow Meters

A peak flow meter measures how open your child's airways are. The peak flow meter can detect even mild changes in the airflow long before symptoms are seen. The peak flow meter measures only the larger airways of the lungs. A pulmonary function test is needed to get a complete measurement of the airways.

Peak flow measurements along with symptom monitoring help you decide:

- if your child's asthma is controlled or not controlled,
- what medications are needed,
- when to call your Health Care Provider (HCP).

The "personal best" peak flow rate is:

- the highest peak flow number your child can reach
- over a two week period
- when he/she is not having asthma symptoms.

This is used to develop "zones" (green, yellow and red, like a traffic light). The zones help you know what actions to take based on;



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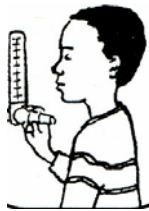
- the peak flow reading
- your child's symptoms.

Your HCP will teach you about peak flow zones if your child is able to perform peak flow measures well (usually at about 6 years of age).



## How to use a peak flow meter:

Step 1. Always have your child stand up to do peak flow measures. Use the same meter each day so that you can compare day to day results.



Step 2. Set the pointer to "0".

Step 3. Have your child take a deep breath and place the meter in their mouth, closing their lips tightly around the mouthpiece. Make sure their tongue is under the mouthpiece, not in it.



Step 4. Have your child blow out as hard and fast as possible. **Make sure** they are blowing out only through their mouth, not their nose (sometimes, gently holding their nose closed helps them to learn the proper way).

Step 5. Repeat two more times and record only the best number on your child's symptom diary.



- Do the peak flow measures as often as your health care professional has told you. In the beginning, readings are done every day morning and evening before taking medications. This will help you find out what your child's best number is (their "personal best"). Later, you will only need to do readings as often as you and your child's HCP decide.
- Personal best numbers will change as your child gets taller. So when they grow, you will need to monitor their peak flows again for two weeks to find their new personal best.
- You should also do peak flow measures anytime you think your child's asthma might be slipping out of control.



- Peak flow readings should be done before and 15 minutes after reliever medication is given to see how much the medicine helped.
- Most peak flow meters can be washed in warm, soapy water. Check with your HCP to see how to clean your peak flow meter.