

What is a Peak Flow Meter?

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is a peak flow meter?

A peak flow meter is a small, portable device that is used to determine how well your lungs are working. It measures how fast air comes out of your lungs when you exhale forcefully. This measure is called a peak expiratory flow, or PEF, and it is measured in liters per minute.



Image Source: www.drgreene.org

ADAM.

What is considered a good reading?

There are predicted PEF ranges based on age, gender, and height. However, it is more important to establish your own baseline value to use for future peak flow measurement comparisons.

To determine your baseline PEF reading:

- This should be done during a period of time when you are feeling your best or within your best asthma control.
- Do your readings prior to using your maintenance inhalers.
- Take peak flow readings twice a day for 2 to 3 weeks at the same time in the morning and evening.
- Record all of your readings on your peak flow meter log.
- Based on these readings, you and your doctor will then determine what you should use as a baseline PEF value for comparing future readings.

Why is it important to use the peak flow meter regularly?

Regular use is important because the readings:

- ✓ Will help you to recognize when your lungs are not working to their full capacity, which may mean that you are headed for an asthma flare-up.
- ✓ Will help your doctor to know how well your asthma medications are working.
- ✓ Can be used to help you determine what is triggering your asthma symptoms by taking readings before and after exposure to suspected triggers, such as your pets.

Knowing this information will help you and your doctor to manage your asthma better.

How is the peak flow meter used?

A peak flow meter is easy to use. Even children as young as 4 years old have been able to use the meters with good results.

1. Set the peak flow meter to zero at the bottom of the meter.
2. Stand up straight and place the mouthpiece in your mouth.
3. Close your lips over the mouth piece to prevent air from leaking out around it.
4. Take a deep breath to fill your lungs completely.
5. Blow, or exhale, the air out into the meter as strongly and quickly as you can in a single blow.
6. Repeat this process three times and record your highest result on your log as your reading.

How shall I record the readings?

It is important to keep track of your peak flow meter readings to show your doctor. This can easily be done by using a diary or log. Attached is a Peak Flow Meter Reading Log for tracking your values.

How often you use your peak flow meter will be based on your individual needs and what is suggested by your doctor. If you are taking asthma medications daily, it may be suggested that you use your peak flow meter daily.

Each time you use your meter, write down the date, time, and your PEF reading. It will also be helpful to track the number of times you needed to use your rescue inhaler and any asthma symptoms you may be having on the days that you are doing your readings.

Bring this log with you to your doctor appointment. This gives your doctor important information regarding how to best treat your asthma.

Source: Cleveland Clinic @ www.clevelandclinic.org Retrieved 01/06.
Nemours Foundation @ <http://kidshealth.org> Retrieved 01/06.

For more Patient Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenhosp.org and Click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education

Greenwich Hospital
Peak Flow Meter Reading Log

Name: _____

My Baseline PEF Reading:

(Check [✓] any of the below symptoms that are present)

Date	Time	Reading	# of Puffs of Rescue Inhaler Today	Cough	Wheeze	Short of Breath	Chest Tightness	Other Symptom (Describe)

My Next Doctor's appointment is: _____