

Peak Flow Meter

What is a peak flow meter?

A peak flow meter measures how fast you can move air out of your lungs in one breath. It is best to check your peak flows around the same time each day.

How do you use a peak flow meter?

1. Before you start the treatment, wash your hands with soap and warm water, or use anti-bacterial hand gel, to reduce the risk of infection.
2. Check the marker on the peak flow meter. Be sure it is at the bottom at zero.
3. Hold the meter straight out. Make sure your fingers do not cover the scale or the end.
4. Stand up. Take a deep breath in. Place the mouthpiece of the meter in your mouth. Close your mouth tightly around it. Do not place your tongue in the hole of the mouthpiece.
5. Blow out as hard and as fast as you can (like you are blowing out a candle). This will cause the marker to move up the scale.
6. Read the marker on the scale and write it down.
7. Repeat all of these steps two more times.
8. After the third time, take the highest number of the three tries and write it down. This is your peak flow reading.

When should I use my peak flow meter?

- During a cold
- If you have asthma symptoms
- Exposure to a trigger (like tobacco smoke or animals)
- When your asthma medicines are changed
- Before using your quick relief medicine

How do I clean my peak flow meter?

Wipe the mouthpiece off with warm soapy water. Rinse and let it air-dry.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©7/2020. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5020