



PEAK FLOW MONITORING

Why Do I Need to Monitor Peak Flow?

Recording your peak flow over time helps you:

- Detect subtle changes that may signal obstruction of your airways so you can intervene before you experience signs and symptoms of an asthma attack.
- Evaluate your course of therapy to see if it is effective.
- Determine when emergency care is needed.
- Identify specific asthma triggers.

How Do I Use the Peak Flow Meter?

Follow these steps:

- Stand or sit up straight.
- Slide the indicator to the bottom of the scale to zero.
- Take a deep breath, and then blow as hard and fast as possible with your lips tight around the mouth piece.
- Note the final position of the indicator. This is your peak flow rate.
- Slide the indicator back to the bottom of the scale and repeat the test twice.
- Record the highest reading of the three attempts.

If your reading is low and you have asthma symptoms, follow your action plan as directed. If your reading is lower than usual, but you have no asthma symptoms, take another reading 30 minutes later. If it is still lower than usual, your asthma may be getting worse. Be alert for symptoms, and follow your action plan.

What Is My Personal Best Peak Flow?

Your personal best peak flow is the highest peak flow rate you can achieve consistently when your asthma is under control. To determine your personal best, measure and record your peak flow twice daily for a week or two when you have few or no asthma symptoms. The consistently highest rate during that week is your personal best. Determine your zones with the help of your allergist.

My personal best peak flow is _____

Green, Yellow, and Red Zones

Green, yellow, and red zones help you gauge your asthma condition on any given day--from all clear or no symptoms to medical alert or severe symptoms. Your peak flow rate each day will fall into one of the zones, which are based on a percentage of your personal best peak flow. Your personal best peak flow may change. If so, recalculate your green, yellow, and red zones. For example, if you consistently get readings above your current personal best for a week or more, you may need to record a new personal best peak flow and adjust your zones.



Green Zone: All Clear

No symptoms of asthma. Able to participate in usual activities. No sleep disturbance due to asthma symptoms.

My green zone peak flow is above _____ (80 to 100 percent of personal best peak flow). To determine, multiply your personal best peak flow by .80 (80%).

Action: Continue with present course of therapy.

Yellow Zone: Caution

Symptoms of difficult breathing: chest tightness, wheezing, and frequent, tight cough that interfere with your usual activities or disturb your sleep.

My yellow zone peak flow is between _____ and _____ (60 to 80 percent of personal best peak flow). To determine, multiply your personal best peak flow by .60 (60%).

Action: You may need an increased dose of your current medication. You may need to take a cortisone medication or increase the dose if you already take this medication. Call your physician if you do not have a plan for increasing your medication.

Red Zone: Medical Alert

Symptoms: Symptoms may include prolonged shortness of breath that medication relieves only briefly or does not relieve, gasping for air, extreme anxiety due to difficulty breathing, continuous coughing, condition rapidly getting worse and extreme fatigue.

My red zone peak flow is below _____ (less than 60 percent of personal best peak flow).

Action: Follow emergency plan.

EMERGENCY PLAN

If you experience any of the following warning signs, do not “wait out” the attack. Proceed immediately to an emergency room facility.

Do not drive yourself. If there is no one to drive you, call 911.

Your peak flow reading remains in the red zone with treatment.

Your asthma is getting progressively worse and there seems to be no great relief of your symptoms 20 minutes after using inhaled bronchodilators.

Your asthma is flaring up and symptoms are similar to a previous asthma attack that was treated at an emergency room or hospital.

You are alarmed by the severity or intensity of your current asthma flare-up.

Other: _____

