

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Peak Flow Meter

## The Early Warning System

### What is a peak flow meter?

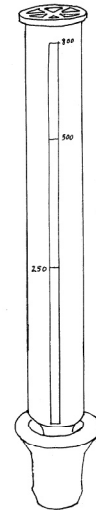
A peak flow meter is one of the tools used to manage asthma. It fits in your hand. It may be made of metal or plastic.

### 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.)
- Do The Peak Flow Meter Word Search Puzzle. (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  
602-546-1400  
[www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com](http://www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com)

#### Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

#34 • Written by Annette Szpiszar Gong, MS, RN • Illustrated by Irene Takamizu



# Peak Flow Meter Word Search

Fill in the blanks to find out which words to look for in the puzzle. The number of stars is the same as the number of letters in the missing word.

They may be forward, backward, up, down or at an angle.

Y	R	N	P	E	A	K	L
E	W	E	B	V	W	O	B
L	H	A	D	N	O	A	J
L	G	E	R	H	O	L	C
O	G	G	C	N	R	V	A
W	T	S	A	S	I	K	L
T	H	R	E	E	A	N	L
G	R	E	E	N	G	D	G

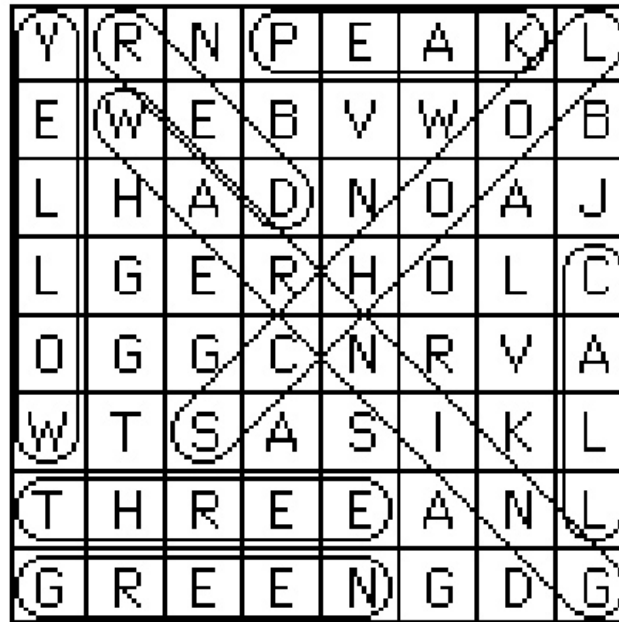
Check the readings twice a day, in the morning and after \*\*\*\*\*. Your child should blow into the meter \*\*\*\*\* times. Take the highest, or \*\*\*\* number as the reading for that time.

Asthma is in good control if the number falls into the \*\*\*\*\* zone. The caution zone is \*\*\*\*\*. This means the asthma is not in good control. The \*\*\* zone is the danger zone. When readings fall into the red zone, you should \*\*\*\* your doctor. If you see any danger signs, like blue or pale lips or your child is unable to talk or walk, call 911.

A peak flow meter can give you an early \*\*\*\*\* sign of an asthma attack on its way.

The answer is on the back of this paper.

# Answers to the Peak Flow Meter Word Search



Check the readings twice a day, in the morning and after school. Your child should blow into the meter three times. Take the highest, or peak number as the reading for that time.

Asthma is in good control if the number falls into the green zone. The caution zone is yellow. This means the asthma is not in good control. The red zone is the danger zone. When readings fall into the red zone, you should call your doctor. If you see any danger signs, like blue or pale lips or your child is unable to talk or walk, call 911.

A peak flow meter can give you an early warning sign of an asthma attack on its way.