

QuickAsthma Card

Peak Flow-to-Go

What is a Peak Flow Meter?

A peak flow meter (PFM) is a portable, hand-held device that measures your Peak Expiratory Flow Rate (PEFR) or how air flows from your lungs in a “fast blast.” It tells you how open your airways are. Just like a thermometer or blood pressure cuff, it provides a clue about what is happening inside your body, often before you can feel a difference. There are three ranges of PFMs – a low range for young children, a standard range for older children, teens and adults, and a full range for all ages.

Who needs a PFM?

If you have persistent asthma, are establishing your personal best peak flow, or are trying to identify asthma triggers, a PFM is an important communication tool. A PFM tells you and your healthcare professional if your medications are working, if they need to be changed and if you need emergency care during an asthma episode. Some children as young as 3 years old can use a PFM successfully.

How does it keep me on the go?

Your healthcare professional can tell you the predicted “normal” peak flow based on height, age, and gender or you can establish your own personal best. It’s easy to do by first following the instructions on the other side of this card. Use the same PFM at least once a day at the same time for at least one week when your asthma is under good control and record the best of three readings each time. Your healthcare professional will set green, yellow and red zones and together you will develop an asthma management plan so you can stay on the go!

Using Your Peak Flow Meter

Ask your healthcare professional if you should use your PFM before and after medications. You will be given instructions on your PFM when you receive it, but keep this card, complete with your information, as an important reminder for you and those who care about you.

1. Before each use, slide the marker or arrow to the bottom of the scale.
2. Always stand, if possible. Remove anything from your mouth. Hold your PFM, making sure your fingers do not touch the scale.
3. Take a deep breath, seal your lips around the mouthpiece of the PFM and blow out as hard and fast as you can. Be careful not to cough or let your tongue touch the mouthpiece.
4. Write down where the arrow stops - this is your PEFR.
5. Move the arrow back to the bottom and rest for at least 30 seconds.
6. Repeat steps 3-5 two more times and write the highest PEFR on your chart to share with your healthcare professional. Remember to note the date and time.



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America

Important Information

YOUR NAME _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____

Use the space below to note your personal PEFM ranges.

GREEN _____ Your asthma is under control!

YELLOW _____ Proceed with caution. Follow your asthma plan.

RED _____ You may be in danger. Follow your asthma plan.
Call your healthcare professional.

Visit the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America website at www.aafa.org for more important details on allergies and asthma.

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