

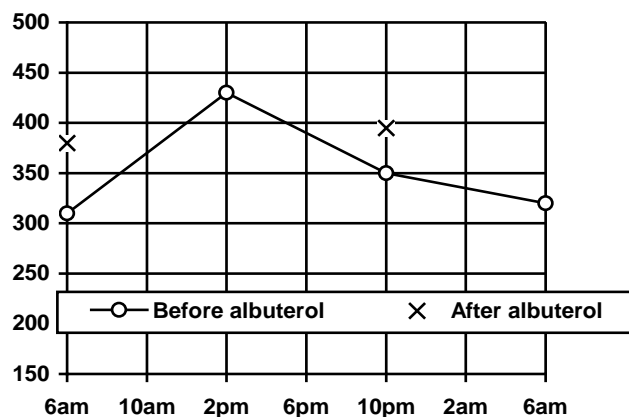
How to use your peak flow meter

Following an asthma action plan can help you treat episodes and prevent episodes from happening. Your action plan is based on how well your lungs are working. We use a peak flow meter to find this out.

A **peak flow meter** measures how well air moves out of your lungs. Using a peak flow meter can predict an asthma episode even before you start to have any symptoms. This allows you to take medicines early and avoid a serious episode of asthma. Taking your medicines early is the most important step you can take to stop an episode of asthma.

Follow these steps to use your peak flow meter:

1. Empty your mouth.
2. Move the pointer to zero.
3. Stand up and hold the meter straight out with your fingers away from the vent holes and the pointer.
4. With your mouth wide open, slowly breathe in as much as possible.
5. Put your lips around the mouthpiece without blocking the opening with your tongue.
6. Blow out as hard and as fast as possible in a sharp, short “huff.”
7. Repeat steps 1 through 6 two more times.
8. Graph the highest value on your “Peak Flow Record” as shown below. If you need to use albuterol, use an “o” to mark the scores of your blow before you inhale albuterol. Use an “x” to mark the score of your blow after you inhale albuterol. You shouldn’t need to use albuterol every time you use a peak flow meter.



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Finding your personal best peak flow number

Rather than looking at numbers that are either very high or very low, we base your action plan on an average of your best possible peak flow numbers when your asthma is under good control.

To find your personal best number, take peak flow readings for 2 or 3 weeks. Take your readings when you first wake up in the morning and then again in the late afternoon or early evening, or as often as your doctor, nurse, or other member of health care team tells you. Use the same peak flow meter each time.

After you've recorded all your readings, your health care team will work with you to find out which number is your personal best.

You may want to record that number here: **My personal best is _____**. You and your care team will use this number to develop an asthma action plan that is best for you.