

Peak Flow Meter

The peak flow meter you are given in the Emergency Department is an important monitoring device for you to manage your asthma. In many cases a reduction in your peak flow will precede serious asthma symptoms and by monitoring your flow you can get an early warning that you are beginning to have problems.

The Respiratory Practitioner or nurse has marked your peak flow meter based on predicted normal flow rates for someone your age, sex and height. When you feel well and free of wheezes establish your personal best peak flow reading.

When using your peak flow meter, think of a traffic light. Whenever your peak flow reading is at or above the green marker continue with your normal routine. When your reading falls in the yellow zone, you should proceed with caution. Call your personal physician or have a treatment plan already worked out with you doctor for when your peak flow is in the yellow zone. When your peak flow reading is in the red zone, **STOP AND SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION** right away.

To perform a peak flow test, sit or stand upright:

1. Take a deep breath in.
2. Put the peak flow mouthpiece in your mouth and make a tight seal around it with your lips. Blow out hard and fast until the indicator on the meter stops moving.
4. Note the peak flow reading.
5. Repeat the procedure three times and note the best reading.



Inhaler Spacer

If you are prescribed a multi-dosed inhaler you will also be given a space device to use with it. The spacer allows you to more effectively deliver the medication to the breathing passages.

When using inhalers it is important to know the date that you start using it and periodically check the amount of medication that is left in it. To do this, take the canister out of its plastic jacket and put it in a bowl of water (see figure 1).

There are several types of medication inhalers that your doctor may prescribe for you to manage your asthma. Each of them can be used with a spacer, some of them have a spacer built into them. **THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO TAKE THEM JUST AS THEY ARE PRESCRIBED BY YOUR DOCTOR-** Do not stop any medications without first consulting with your doctor.

To use your spacer, first remove the caps from your inhaler and the spacer. Shake your inhaler vigorously before each use.

1. Hold the inhaler with your middle finger on the sprayer, and your index finger and thumb around the spacer.
2. Breathe out normally, place the opening of spacer in your mouth and close your lips tightly around it.
3. Spray the inhaler once, then breathe in slowly and deeply. If you breathe in too fast you will hear a whistling sound.
4. Hold your breath for 5-10 seconds then breathe out slowly through pursed lips.
5. If you are prescribed more than one puff, repeat steps 1-4 above after waiting a minute or two.

MANAGE YOUR ASTHMA

Think traffic light with your peak flow meter

GREEN

(More than 80% of your personal best reading)

Means go, maintain your current therapy plan.

YELLOW

(50-79% of your best reading)

Use caution, consult your doctor and have a predetermined treatment plan.

RED

(Less than 50% of your best reading)

STOP and seek medical attention right away. You are having severe asthma symptoms

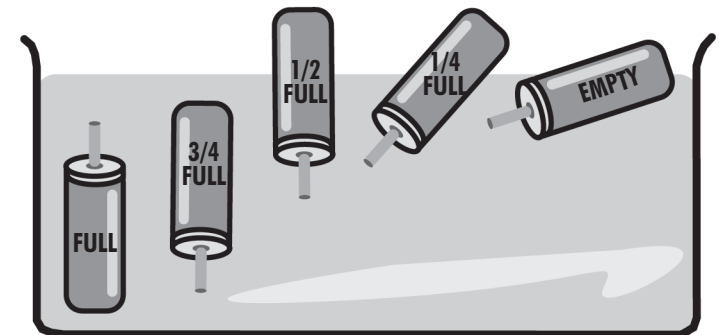


Figure 1.

This drawing illustrates how the canister will float in a bowl of water depending upon the amount of medication left in it.

