

Keeping on Top of Asthma

Keeping on top of asthma is very important. If you and your child watch for early signs that asthma is getting worse, you can act in time to stop it.

There are two ways to keep on top of asthma. The first way is to watch for early warning signs. The second way is to use a peak flow meter.

Early Warning Signs

Early warning signs are clues that your child's asthma is getting worse. They may be things your child feels or things you notice. They may happen days or hours before an asthma attack.

If you catch warning signs early, you can stop asthma attacks. Each person's early warning signs are different. It is important to know your child's warning signs.

Here is a list of common early warning signs. Put a check mark (☑) next to your child's warning signs. Think about whether they usually occur in your child days or hours before an asthma attack.

- Tiredness
- Itchy, watery or glassy eyes
- Itchy, scratchy or sore throat
- Stroking chin or throat
- Sneezing
- Stopped up head
- Headache
- Fever
- Restlessness
- Quiet
- Runny nose
- Red or pale face
- Dark circles under the eyes
- Others:



Asthma Signs

These are signs that your child is having trouble breathing:

- Coughing, especially at night
- Wheezing
- Chest feels tight or hurts
- Breathing faster than normal
- Less activity
- Getting out of breath easily

Help your child watch for and learn these signs of trouble. If they appear, your child needs help. Talk with your doctor about using a quick-relief medicine when you notice these signs.

Bad Asthma Signs

These are signs that your child is having a bad asthma attack:

- Trouble talking, walking or thinking
- Hunched shoulders
- Neck and ribs moving in with breathing
- Grey or blue skin color, starting around the mouth

A child with any of these signs needs help right away. Talk with your doctor about using a quick-relief medicine and getting emergency help as soon as possible.



WATCH
for asthma signs

**Is your child's
number in the
red zone?
Red means stop!
Get help now!**

Peak Flow Meter

A peak flow meter is a quick and easy way to keep on top of asthma. It can tell if your child is having trouble breathing even before you or your child notice.

The meter is a hand-held device that measures how well air is moving in and out of the lungs. To use it, you have to know how to blow hard. For this reason, they are not used with very young children.

There are many kinds of peak flow meters. Your doctor can help you get the kind that is best for your child. Have the doctor show your child how to use the peak flow meter and how to find a personal best number. This is the number that the meter should reach if your child is breathing easily. When your child's peak flow number falls below his or her personal best, it's a sign of breathing trouble.

If your child has bad asthma, your doctor may want a peak flow meter used every day. The doctor can tell you how to use the numbers to know when to give your child a quick-relief medicine, when to call the doctor or when to go to the hospital. Keep a written record of these numbers. Then you and your doctor can figure out if long-term control medicines are working and what makes your child's asthma worse.



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Peak Flow Zones

Peak flow meters use colors (green, yellow and red) to divide the numbers into three zones.

Is your child's number in the green zone?
Green means go—your child is breathing fine.

Is your child's number in the yellow zone?
Yellow means caution. There may be a problem coming.

Is your child's number in the red zone?
Red means stop! Get help now!

Talk with your doctor about your child's zones.
Ask what medicine to use when your child's peak flow numbers are in each zone.



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