

Completing a peak flow diary

What is a peak flow?

A “peak flow” is a lung function test which tells us how quickly you can blow air out of your lungs. It is a quick and simple test you can do yourself using a peak flow meter, a small handheld device.

What is a peak flow diary?

A healthcare professional may ask you to complete a “peak flow diary”. This is when you measure and write down your peak flow reading several times a day for a few weeks. This helps us to assess how your lung function might change in different places, such as at and away from work. Completing a peak flow diary can be repetitive, but it is very important to help us diagnose conditions such as occupational asthma.

How do I complete a peak flow diary?

We will provide you with a peak flow meter if you haven't got one, and diary sheets. Repeat the below steps each time you measure your peak flow:



Scan code to watch a video on how to measure your peak flow

1. If safe for you to do so, always measure your peak flow whilst **standing up**.
2. **Pull the pointer (red arrow) back to the start before every blow**. Do not obstruct the pointer with your hand.
3. Take a **deep breath in**, make a **tight seal** with your mouth around the mouthpiece, then **blow as hard and fast as you can** into the meter.
4. Note which number the arrow is pointing to on the scale.
5. Do this three times in a row so you get three readings at each hour done. **Write down the highest of the three readings on your chart. You can round to the nearest ten.**

****Measure your peak flow 6 times a day, for 4 continuous weeks****

Remember:

- **Complete the diary sheet correctly and as much as you can every day**. This includes your working hours and any relevant exposures, any inhalers used, and any difficulties with your breathing.
- **Do not miss any days**. Do measurements every single day in the specified period, including days at and away from work, weekends, and holidays.
- Measure your peak flow **before you use your inhaler** rather than immediately after.
- Only do measurements **whilst you are awake**.
- You don't need to measure at the same time each day – just **throughout the whole day**.
- You can wash the peak flow meter with warm soapy water if needed, and let it air dry.

What do I do once I have completed my peak flow diary?

As soon as you have completed your peak flow diary, you need to share it with the healthcare professional who requested it so it can be analysed in time for your next clinical review.

If you are a patient in our NHS Occupational Lung Disease clinic (Royal Brompton Hospital), please send your peak flow diary to the nurse as soon as you have completed it, by any of the following methods:

- **By email:** gstt.OCLD@nhs.net (preferred)
- **By WhatsApp/text message:** 07977 352 164
- **By post:** Tamanna Kabir, Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, National Heart and Lung Institute, Guy Scadding Building, Cale Street, London SW3 6LY (ensure to keep a copy in case lost in post!)