



Pediatric Clinic
ASTHMA EDUCATION HANDOUTS

Correct Use of a Metered-Dose Inhaler

Using a metered-dose inhaler is a good way to take asthma medicines. There are fewer side effects because the medicine goes right to the lungs and not to other parts of the body. It takes only 5 to 15 minutes for short-acting bronchodilator medicines to have an effect compared to oral bronchodilator asthma medicines, which can take 1 to 3 hours. Inhalers can be used by all asthma patients age 5 and older. A holding chamber (or spacer device) attached to the inhaler can help make taking the medication easier for even younger children. These devices are helpful to people having trouble using an inhaler.

The inhaler must be cleaned often to prevent buildup that will clog it and reduce how well it works.

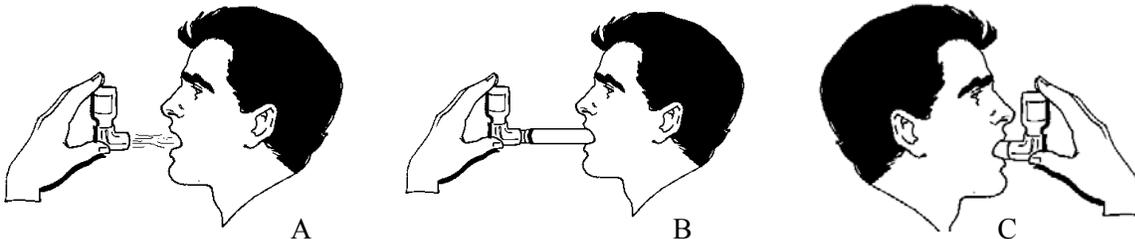
- The guidelines that follow will help you use the inhaler the right way.
- Ask your physician to show you how to use the inhaler; then demonstrate your technique so that your physician can make sure you are doing it correctly.

Using the Inhaler:

1. Remove the cap and hold the inhaler upright.
2. Shake the inhaler (3 to 5 times).
3. Tilt your head back slightly and breathe out.
4. Use the inhaler in any one of the following ways: (A is the best way, but C is okay if you are having trouble with A or B.)
 - A. Open mouth wide, with inhaler 1 to 2 inches away
 - B. Use spacer
 - C. In the mouth
5. Press down on the inhaler to release the medication as you start to breathe in slowly.
6. Breathe in *slowly and completely* for 3 to 5 seconds.
7. *Hold* your breath for 10 seconds to allow the medication to reach deeply into your lungs.
8. Repeat puffs as prescribed. Never take more than one puff at a time (ie, 1 shake and 1 puff).

Waiting 1 minute between puffs may permit the second puff to go deeper into the lungs.

Note: Dry-powder capsules are used differently. To use a dry-powder inhaler, close your mouth tightly around the mouthpiece and inhale very fast.



Spacers

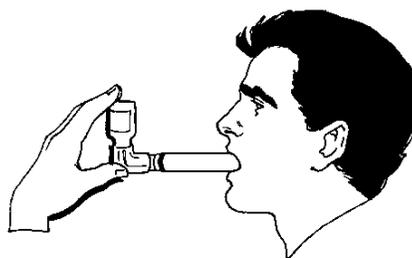
Unless you use your inhaler in the right way, much of the medication may end up on your tongue, at the back of your throat, or in the air. Use of a or holding chamber (or spacer device) can help this problem.

A spacer is a device that attaches to a metered-dose inhaler. It holds the medication in its chamber long enough for you to inhale it in one or two slow deep breaths. The spacer makes it easy for you to use the medication the right way (especially if your child is young or you have a hard time using just an inhaler). It reduces the cough that some inhalers cause. A spacer will also help prevent you from getting a yeast infection in your mouth (thrush) when taking inhaled corticosteroid drugs.

There are many models of spacers that you can purchase through your pharmacist or a medical supply company. Ask your physician about which of the different models of inhalers is best for you.

How To Use a Spacer:

9. Attach the inhaler to the spacer as explained by your physician or by using the directions that come with the product.
10. Shake well.
11. Press the button on the inhaler. This will put one puff of the medication in the holding chamber.
12. Place the mouthpiece of the spacer in your mouth and inhale slowly. (A face mask may be helpful for a young child.)
13. Hold your breath for a few seconds and then exhale.



Repeat steps 4 and 5 *two* more times. If your physician has prescribed two puffs, wait between puffs for the amount of time he or she has directed and repeat steps 2 through 5 as much as prescribed. Be sure to clean the spacer as directed.

Young children may need to use a different technique; have your physician show you and your child the correct technique.

Demonstrate for your physician how you use the spacer to make sure you are using it correctly.

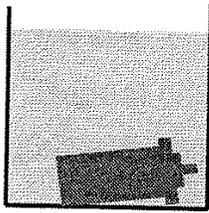
Cleaning:

1. Once a day clean the inhaler and cap by rinsing them in warm running water. Let the inhaler dry before you use it again. Have another inhaler to use while it is drying.
2. Twice a week, wash the plastic mouthpiece with mild dishwashing soap and warm water. Rinse and dry well before putting it back.

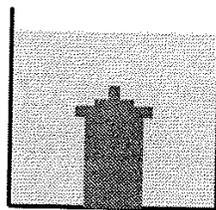
Checking How Much Medication Is Left in the Canister:

1. If the canister is new, it is full.
2. If the inhaler is one that is used on a scheduled basis (that is, a controller medicine), divide the total amount of puffs in the inhaler and divide this by how many puffs you take everyday. The answer is how many days the inhaler will last. Replace the inhaler after that many days, even if it feels like some medicine is still left over.

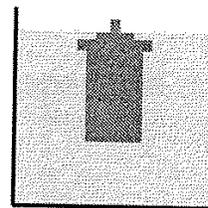
If the medicine is used only on an as needed basis (that is, a relieve medicine) and you can't keep track of how many sprays you use. An easy way to check the amount of medicine left in your metered-dose inhaler is to place the canister in a container of water and observe the position it takes in the water.



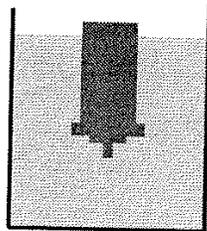
Full



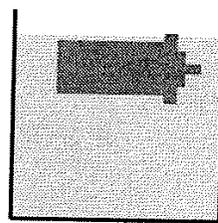
Almost Full



About 1/2 Empty



About 1/3 Full



Empty