

Tips for Correct Use of Metered Dose Inhalers (MDIs) Information for Patients

Advantages

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Easy-to-use and can be taken with you.</i> • <i>Sends your medicine directly into the large and small breathing tubes (bronchial tubes) of your lungs.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Because your medicine is delivered directly to your lungs it is more effective and causes fewer medicine-related side effects. This is different from a pill or a shot which sends medicine to your entire body.</i>
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To get the best results from your inhaler, have your healthcare professional teach you how to correctly use it. Also, follow the simple tips on this sheet; they'll serve as a reminder.

Types of Inhalers

Wet Metered Dose Inhalers	Dry Powder Metered Dose Inhalers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: small canister attached to a mouthpiece, often "L" shaped, medicine and a pressurized propellant inside. • Propellant forces medicine into lungs as you breathe in. • Requires priming with 2 to 3 test sprays before first use or if not used for several days. • Shake well before each use. • Can be used with a spacer (a tube that attaches to the mouthpiece to help make the medicine go deeper into the lungs and increase effectiveness). • Clean the mouthpiece with water and dry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: a single "disk" or "tube" shaped device (<i>Diskus, Rotadisk, Turbuhaler</i>), dry medicine is inside. • Breathing in forces medicine into your lungs. It does not have a propellant inside. • Does not require priming after activating and loading the first dose. • Does not require shaking. • No spacer is needed or should be used. • Clean the mouthpiece when needed with water and dry immediately. Do not get the unit wet or place in water. • Capsules for inhalation (such as those used in <i>Foradil Aerolizer</i> or <i>Spiriva HandiHaler</i>) must not be swallowed.

Steps for Use

The exact steps will be taught to you by your healthcare professional and will depend on the type of inhaler you have. The steps below are common to all inhalers:

1. Take off the cap and shake the inhaler. If you're using a dry inhaler, just open it.
2. Breathe out all the way.
3. Hold the inhaler the way you were shown. If you are using a dry powder inhaler, activate it so that the powder is ready to be inhaled.
4. As you start breathing in slowly through your mouth, press down on the inhaler. If you have a spacer attached to the inhaler, press down on the inhaler, wait a few seconds, and then breathe in. If you use a dry powder inhaler, put the mouthpiece to your lips and breathe in quickly.
5. Hold your breath as you count to 10 slowly, if you can.
6. Breathe out slowly.
7. If your prescription calls for another puff, wait about a minute, shake if you're using a wet inhaler, and repeat.

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What to Do If You Have More than One Inhaler Prescription

- One inhaler medicine (a **bronchodilator**) relaxes and opens your airways.
- Another medicine (an **anti-inflammatory**) decreases swelling and irritation.
- **Always use the inhaler that opens the airways first (bronchodilator).**
- If your prescription calls for more than one puff, wait about a minute, and shake between puffs if you're using a wet inhaler.
- If your doctor has prescribed another inhaler, wait 5 minutes before using it.
- Your anti-inflammatory inhaler should be used last.
- If you have used an anti-inflammatory inhaler, always rinse your mouth with water and spit it out. Doing this will prevent yeast infections in your mouth.

Don't Run Out of Your Inhalers

Your best breathing depends on using your inhalers as your doctor prescribed. Make sure that you always have enough medicine in your inhalers or you have a fresh refill on hand.

- For inhalers that you use daily:
 - Your pharmacist can tell you how many days' supply is in each inhaler. When you start using a new inhaler write down the date it will be used up. Don't use it after that date, since the correct dose may not be delivered. To know how many puffs you have left in your inhaler, count the puffs you used.
- For inhalers that you use when they're needed for symptoms:
 - Your pharmacist can tell you how many puffs are in each inhaler. Keep track of how many puffs you've used.
- If your inhaler has a dose counter on it, you'll always know.
- Don't put the canister from your inhaler in water (the "float" test) to see if it's empty. That doesn't work and may damage your inhaler.

Storage

Always store your inhalers at room temperature or on your person if you are going out. Don't leave them in a car.