
Using a Metered-Dose Inhaler

To control asthma, you need to use your medicines the right way. Your healthcare provider may prescribe medicine that you breathe in using a metered-dose inhaler (MDI). An MDI sends a measured amount of medicine in a fine mist to your lungs. The medicine must be breathed deeply into your lungs for it to work. It will not work at all if it reaches only your mouth and throat.

Step 1:

- Wash your hands.
- Check the expiration date and the dose counter of the inhaler, if there is one.
- Check to make sure the metal canister is put correctly into the plastic boot, or holder of the inhaler. See the package insert for instructions.
- Remove the cap from the inhaler mouthpiece. Shake the inhaler several times.
- If this is the first time you have used the inhaler, or if you have not used the inhaler for a while, you will need to prime it. That means making sure it is ready to use. Follow the product's instructions for priming your inhaler. Make sure to prime the inhaler in the air away from your face.

Step 2:

- Take a deep breath and let it out.
- Get ready to use your inhaler with the "closed-mouth" or "open-mouth" method, as your healthcare provider told you to do.
- For the "closed-mouth" method, put the inhaler mouthpiece in your mouth past your teeth and above your tongue. Close your lips tightly around the mouthpiece.
- If you were told to use the "open-mouth" method, hold the inhaler 1 to 2 inches or 2 finger widths in front of your mouth.
- Keep your chin level.

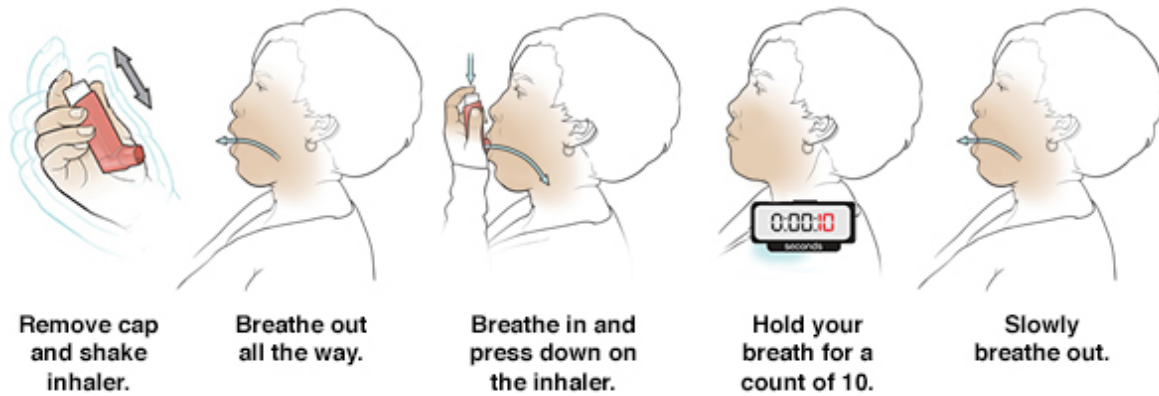
Step 3:

- Press down on the canister 1 time to release the medicine. At the same time, breathe in deeply and slowly for a count of about 3 to 5 seconds, if you are able.
- Remove the inhaler mouthpiece from your mouth if you are using the closed-mouth method. If you are using the open-mouth method, move the mouthpiece away from your mouth. Then close your lips.

Step 4:

- Hold your breath for up to 10 seconds, or as long as you can comfortably.
- Then breathe out slowly through your mouth.

- Repeat these steps for each puff of medicine prescribed. Wait at least 15 seconds to 1 minute before taking the next puff, or as long as directed by your healthcare provider.



Important

- Clean your inhaler as directed by the product maker. You can find important information about the medicine in the package insert. This is the paper that comes with the medicine.
- After using your inhaler, rinse your mouth with water. Swish, gargle, and spit out the water. Never swallow it. Inhaled corticosteroids can cause a fungal infection called thrush in your mouth and throat. Wash your hands when you're done.
- If you use more than one inhaler, make sure you know which one to use first.
- Your healthcare provider or pharmacist can show you how to use your inhaler the right way. Even if you think you are using it the right way, it is still a good idea to check.
- If you are having trouble using your inhaler, ask your healthcare provider about getting a spacer.
- Know how many puffs are left in your inhaler. That way, you won't run out of your medicine when you need it. Ask your provider how to determine how many puffs are left.