

How Asthma Medicines Are Taken

In this episode, Nurse Nightingale is going to teach Big how to take his medicines. Deep breath, and here we go!

One of the ways to take your asthma medicine is to breathe it in from an “inhaler” what some people call a “puffer” or an “MDI”.

Psst! Mother. I got an idea. You tug one arm, and I’ll tug the other, and we’ll have a little pulled pork before lunch.

Ah dad, come on! This is important! MDI? What’s that?

Metered Dose Inhaler. That just means the inhaler delivers a certain amount of medicine each time. But, there are other ways to get asthma medicine into your body.

Like what?

You can use a nebulizer...

Yeah, I used one of those when I first got here. It turns the medicine into a mist, and you breathe it in.

That’s right. A nebulizer is a little more complicated than a puffer, plus you have to be somewhere with electricity because it has to be plugged in to work. Here, I’ll show you to remind you.

You were plugged into that?! Oh, my poor baby!

No, ma, it wasn’t a big deal. In fact, it was easy and made me feel better. Nurse Nightingale, could you show us again how this nebulizer works?

You plug this tubing into the machine. Then you pour the medicine into that little holder.

I like the puffer better. It seems easier.

I agree. And, you already are pretty good at using it. But, I also want you to know how to use a spacer with your puffer.

What’s a spacer?

A spacer is really just a tube, but a special sort of tube that you use with your inhaler. This special inhaler is for practicing. It only has water in it. You might get too much medicine if you practice with the real thing. Now, put the puffer into the end of the spacer. Put the mouthpiece into your mouth.

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Aren't you supposed to shake? I've seen other kids do that.

Like this?

You should always shake your inhaler before you use it. Smaller kids will often use a face mask instead of a mouthpiece. Tilt your head back slightly. OK, with the inhaler pointing up on the other end of the spacer, put your lips tight around the mouthpiece and press down on the inhaler, usually just once. Then, take a slow, deep breath. Try to hold your breath for 10 seconds if you can. Well done! The spacer makes sure the medicine gets into your lungs where it will help instead of just the back of your mouth where it does no good.

The kid has natural breathing technique. He's a Big Bad Wolf. I mean...after all.

Well, are there any other ways he could take his asthma medicine?

Yes, although puffers are the most common. Some medicine comes in pills you just swallow or some you can chew. Some may be liquid that you can drink. And sometimes asthma medicine is given by injection. But these puffers are what Dr. Yan and I think are best for Big today.

Once Big learned how and when to take his medicines and avoid his triggers, he was well on his way to getting his asthma under control.

Lots of kids have asthma, so you are not alone. By seeing your doctor regularly, taking your medicine, avoiding your triggers, and following your Asthma Action Plan, you should be able to do most everything you've always done.

It's not easy and there is a lot to know. But your doctors, nurses, friends and family can all help you control your asthma.

So you can get your huff & puff back too.

And live happily ever after!