

Asthma Management: Using a Nebulizer

Some medicines for asthma are delivered with the help of a small machine called a nebulizer.

Nebulizers convert medication from a liquid to a fine mist so that it can be easily inhaled.

Nebulizers are typically used in the hospital but can be prescribed for home use as well.

Nebulizers come in several different models, but each has: a medicine cup, an air compressor, tubing, and a mouthpiece or mask.

Be sure to follow the instructions for your brand of nebulizer. But in general, using a nebulizer involves the following steps:

First, fill the medicine cup with the prescribed amount of medication and close it tightly.

Then, connect the tubing to the air compressor and to the medicine cup.

Next, attach the mouthpiece or mask to the medicine cup.

Turn on the compressor. In a couple of seconds, you'll see a light mist coming out of the device.

Put the mouthpiece in your mouth, between your teeth, and seal your lips around it, or cover your nose and mouth with the mask.

Breathe in the mist for 10 to 15 minutes or until all of the medicine evaporates.

Clean the medicine cup and mouthpiece or mask once or twice a week. Wash them in warm soapy water, then rinse with distilled water and let them air dry. Place a paper towel over top to keep them free of dust and lint.

Each nebulizer is a little different, so follow your caregiver's instructions for cleaning your particular model, and replace parts as recommended.