

Teaching Your Child to Use an Inhaler With a Spacer

Helping your child use their inhaler correctly is an important part of caring for your child.

A metered-dose inhaler and a spacer can help get the right amount of medicine *right* into your child's lungs.

Metered dose means that the inhaler gives a measured amount of medicine each time your child uses it. This type of inhaler delivers medicine in the form of a liquid mist.

A spacer is a chamber that attaches to the inhaler. The spacer holds the dose of medicine while your child inhales it. The spacer makes it easier for your child to get the medicine into their lungs.

Before you get started, here are a few things to remember.

Inhalers come in different shapes, sizes, and doses. Each kind is used differently. Read the instructions that come with the inhaler and the spacer.

Make sure you use the right inhaler at the right time. Label each inhaler if you have more than one.

Check the instructions to see if you need to prime the inhaler before use. Prime means to get it ready. If the inhaler needs priming, follow the instructions.

Before you begin using an inhaler, be sure you've worked with a nurse, doctor, pharmacist, or respiratory therapist to make sure you're using it correctly. But here's how someone would generally use a metered-dose inhaler with a spacer.

Begin by shaking the inhaler for 5 seconds. Remove the cap.

Next, hold the inhaler upright with the mouthpiece at the bottom. Then place the mouthpiece of the inhaler into the spacer.

Now, have your child stand or sit up straight. With the spacer a short distance from their mouth, they should breathe out slowly and completely.

Next, have your child place the spacer's mouthpiece in their mouth. They should close their lips tightly around the mouthpiece and keep their tongue away from the opening.

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Have your child press down on the inhaler to spray 1 puff of medicine into the spacer. They should start breathing in slowly and deeply. Have them hold their breath for 5 to 10 seconds, and then remove the spacer's mouthpiece from their mouth. Then they should breathe out slowly.

If your child needs another puff of medicine, wait 1 minute between puffs.

Remove the inhaler from the spacer, and replace the caps.

Have your child rinse their mouth with water if the inhaler has corticosteroids , such as fluticasone.

Controller inhalers usually have corticosteroids. Do not let your child swallow the water. So that's how to use a metered-dose inhaler with a spacer.

Now here are some other reminders.

Use the inhaler's dose counter to see how many doses are left, and get inhaler refills before you run out.

Follow the instructions for cleaning the inhaler and the spacer. This will help you do it the right way for each inhaler.

It can feel stressful to learn how to help your child use an inhaler.

But using a metered-dose inhaler and a spacer can help your child feel better and breathe easier. And if you have questions, you can always call your child's doctor.