

VII. USING YOUR BREATHING AIDS

A. Metered-Dose Inhaler

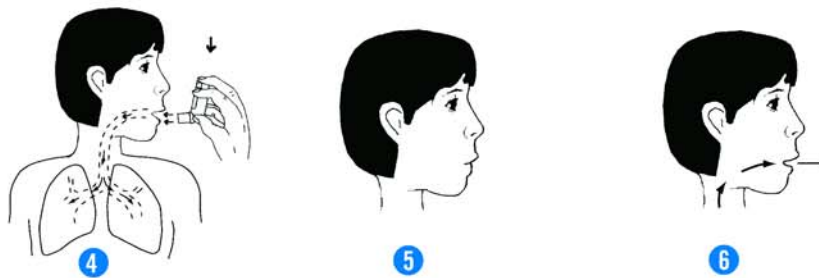
An inhaler is a sprayer made to deliver a dose of medicine that you can breathe deeply into your lungs. In a metered-dose inhaler, the medicine comes packaged in a spray container. Using an inhaler seems simple, but most patients do not use it the right way. When you use your inhaler the wrong way, less medicine gets to your lungs. To properly use a metered-dose inhaler, follow these steps:



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1. Remove the cap from the mouthpiece. Shake the entire unit.
2. Breathe out completely.
3. Hold the inhaler properly by placing your index finger on the top of the metal canister and your thumb on the bottom of the plastic mouth-piece. Place the inhaler one or two inches away from your mouth.



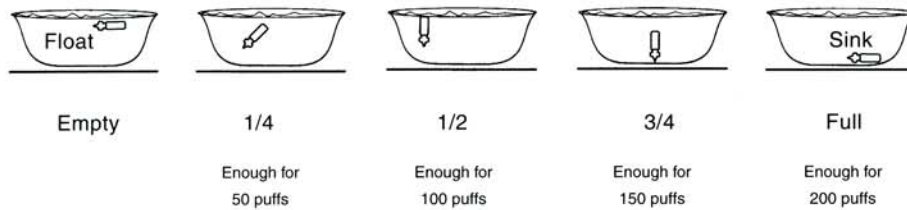
4. Press the top of the canister down firmly. At the same time, inhale deeply and slowly through your mouth.
5. Continue to inhale deeply. Hold your breath for 5 to 10 seconds.
6. Release the canister and remove the canister from your mouth. Breathe out slowly.

7. If your doctor has ordered more than one puff, wait at least 1 minute before the next puff. This allows the first puff to open your airway, enabling the second puff to penetrate more deeply.
8. Repeat above steps for each puff.
9. Do not increase the number or frequency of puffs without asking your physician.

Care of your inhaler

1. Wash your inhaler thoroughly at least once a day. The mouth piece may get blocked unless cleaned daily.
2. Remove the metal canister and rinse the mouthpiece and cap in warm water.
3. Dry thoroughly.
4. Do not puncture your inhaler or discard it in a fire because its contents are under pressure. Do not store or use near heat or open flame.

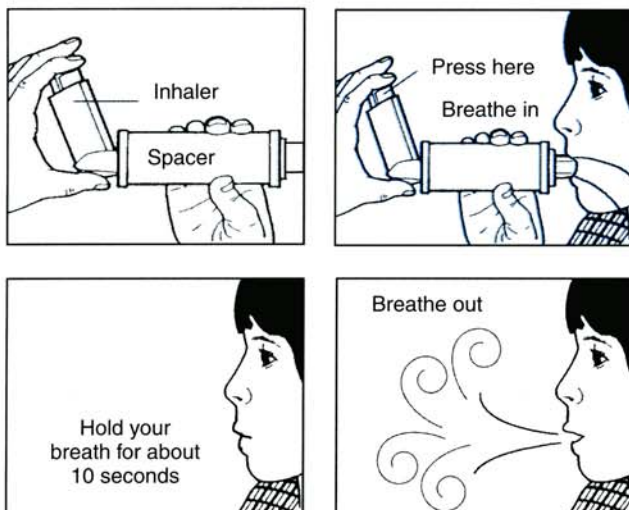
This chart shows an easy method for estimating the contents of your inhaler. Simply place your canister in a bowl of water and compare its position with the chart:



When your inhaler has 1/4 left, it is time to re-order.

To properly use a spacer, follow these steps:

1. Put the spacer on the inhaler. Shake well.
2. Breathe out normally.
3. Press down 1 time on the inhaler. This gives you 1 puff of medicine. Breathe in as SLOWLY and DEEPLY as possible through your mouth. Hold your breath while you count slowly to 10 in your head.
4. Take the mouthpiece out of your mouth.
5. If your health care provider has prescribed two puffs, wait 1-2 minutes then repeat steps 2 through 4.

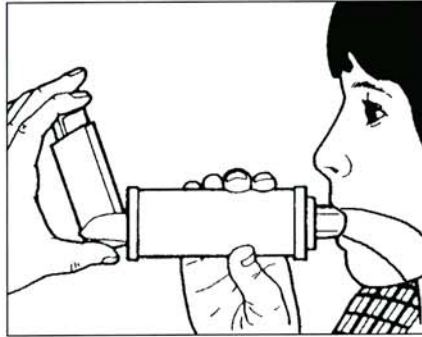


Care of Your Spacer

1. Gently wash both the inside and outside of the spacer with warm (not hot) soapy water and rinse thoroughly once a week. If your spacer has a separate bag attachment, cleaning the bag is not recommended. Instead, replace the bag every few weeks or immediately if the bag is torn. Replacing the bag will require a doctor's prescription. The mouthpiece may be cleaned using these instructions.
2. After washing and rinsing, soak the spacer in a solution of 1 part vinegar to 3 parts water, followed by a very thorough rinse. This will kill germs in and on the spacer.
3. After cleaning, air dry completely before using or storing. Do not place in dishwasher, near a stove or other source of heat.

B. Spacer

Spacer devices or “spacers” help deposit more medications into your lungs and decrease the amount of medications left on the back of your



throat by as much as 80%. Inhaled corticosteroids should always be used with spacers to greatly reduce any yeast infection (thrush) in the mouth and throat. Always rinse your mouth with water after using corticosteroids. This will help reduce the chances of thrush.

The graphic below shows different kinds of spacers you can buy in stores:

