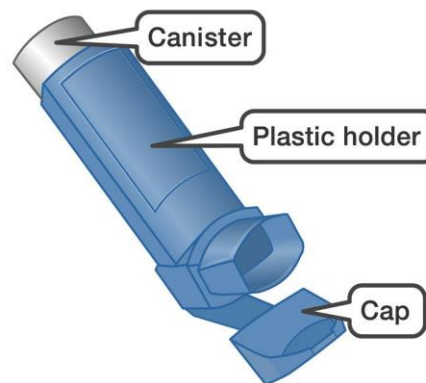


Asthma: Using a metered-dose inhaler (MDI) with a Spacer

What is a metered-dose inhaler?

Many asthma medications are given using a metered-dose inhaler (MDI). Sometimes it may also be referred to as a puffer or inhaler. An MDI is made up of a metal canister inserted into a plastic holder. The metal canister contains the asthma medicine and the expiry date is often stamped on the side of this canister. When the canister is pushed down, it sprays a puff of medicine out. An MDI should ALWAYS be used with a spacer.



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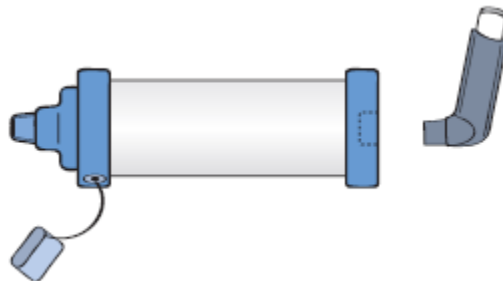
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What is a spacer?

A spacer slows the down the medicine and acts as a holding chamber for the medicine that is sprayed out of the MDI. A spacer helps to ensure appropriate amount of medicine reaches the lungs and lessens the potential side effects in the mouth and throat.

What is a spacer with mouthpiece?

When able to follow instructions to correctly seal the lips around the mouthpiece a switch from a spacer and mask to one with a mouthpiece can happen. This usually happens around the age of 5 or 6. A spacer with a mouthpiece allows for better delivery of the medicine to the lungs and avoids medicine being left on the face and in the nose.



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How to Use a Spacer

Step 1

Collect the MDI and spacer

Gather up the spacer and the metered dose MDI. Check the expiry date of your medication and inspect all parts of your spacer and mask are working properly.

Step 2

Get Ready

Shake the MDI 5 times. Remove the cap from the MDI. Insert the mouth piece of the MDI into the rubber hole of the spacer. The MDI should fit tightly into the hole.

Sit or stand in a straight position.



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Step 3

Breathe out fully away from the spacer. Place the mouthpiece of the spacer into your child's mouth and have your child tightly seal lips around the mouthpiece. Ensure teeth and tongue are not in the way of the hole in the spacer.

Hold the spacer with one hand and with the other hand press the MDI down firmly with your thumb. This will release one puff into the spacer.



Step 4

Take in one slow, deep breath through the mouth and hold the breath for 10 seconds.

If your child is unable to do this your child should take 6 slow deep breaths. You can watch a valve inside of the spacer to count the breaths.

If your child is not breathing properly the chamber will make a loud whistling sound. If this happens have your child breath in and out more slowly.

DO NOT GIVE MORE THAN 1 PUFF AT A TIME INTO THE SPACER. If your child needs to take more than 1 puff of medicine, remove the spacer, wait 30 seconds, then repeat steps 2-4. **REMEMBER TO SHAKE THE CANISTER 5 TIMES BEFORE GIVING ANOTHER PUFF OF MEDICINE.**

Step 5

Rinse mouth

(This step is only necessary if your child is using a controller medicine.)

Make sure your child drinks or rinses their mouth with water. This will help remove any medicine that may be left in the mouth to prevent thrush. Thrush is a yeast infection that can cause white patches on the mouth and tongue.



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Cleaning instructions

Be sure to always read the manufactures instructions to determine the correct care for your metered dose inhaler and spacer.

- The spacer should be cleaned once a week using a mild detergent and left upright to air dry. The rubber back piece on the spacer can be removed but do not take off the mouthpiece.
- The MDI should be cleaned with a dry cloth and NEVER submerged in water.
- Inspect both your MDI and spacer regularly to make sure all parts are intact and working properly. If you think there might be a problem with your child's spacer, or if you have been using it for one year, have a doctor, nurse, pharmacist or respiratory therapist check it.

Helpful Hints

- Always check the expiry date of your MDI.
- If your MDI does not have a dose counter ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist how many doses are in the MDI and write on the metal canister the date when the MDI was first used. This will help you to keep track of how many doses are remaining. Even when the medicine in the canister is gone it may still make a sound when you shake it and a puff may appear when you push down on the canister. Missed doses may negatively affect your asthma control.
- When using the MDI for the first time or when it has not been used for more than a week, you should make sure it is working properly by releasing 2-3 puffs into the air before using a dose.
- Store the MDI at room temperature.
- Properly using an MDI with a spacer is not always easy but with proper use it can help you to have more successful management at home and less frequent trips to the hospital