



How to Use Your **INHALER**

There are two types of inhalers, a pump (also called a metered-dose inhaler) and a dry powder inhaler. Your pump works best if you use it with a spacer. You cannot use a spacer with a dry powder inhaler.

What does a spacer do?

People may not breathe in enough medicine because it can be hard to breathe in and spray your inhaler at the same time. Spacers make this easier. A spacer helps you get the asthma medicine from your inhaler into your lungs.

Are there different types of spacers?

- Yes. Some spacers have a valve. These are called valved holding chambers, or VHCs. When you spray your inhaler into a spacer with a valve, the valve holds the medicine for a few seconds so you can breathe it in correctly.
- Some VHCs have whistles that tell you if you're breathing in your medicine too fast. If the spacer whistles, SLOW down. You're breathing in too quickly.

How do I use a spacer?

1. Take off the inhaler cap.
2. Check the mouthpieces on both your inhaler and your spacer. Make sure there's nothing in either that you might breathe in.
3. Put the inhaler in the spacer.
4. Shake the inhaler well for 5 seconds and put the spacer mouthpiece in your mouth behind your teeth and above your tongue.





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5. Take a slow deep breath in and at the same time, spray the inhaler ONCE. Breathe in for 3-5 seconds. If you hear a whistle sound, you're breathing in too fast. Slow down until the whistle sound stops.
6. Hold your breath for 10 seconds.
7. Repeat steps 4, 5, and 6 if your provider has told you to take more than one puff of your medicine. If you're using a quick reliever, you should wait 10-15 seconds before taking your next puff. If you're using a long-term controller, you don't need to wait between puffs.

How do I get a spacer?

- Your provider has to write you a prescription for a spacer. A VHC spacer is the best type of spacer so make sure your provider writes the prescription for that type and that this is the type of spacer you get.
- You may need to get your spacer prescription filled at a pharmacy, or you may need to mail the prescription in to an equipment company, which will mail your spacer to you. If you have insurance, your insurance company can tell you which you need to do.

Do I have to clean my spacer or my inhaler?

Yes! You have to clean both. How you clean each depends on what kind of spacer and inhaler you have. Follow the cleaning instructions that came with your spacer and your inhaler. If you have any questions, ask your provider or pharmacist.

How do I use my inhaler if I don't have a spacer?

1. Take off the inhaler cap.
2. Check the mouthpiece of your inhaler and make sure there's nothing in it that you might breathe in.
3. Shake the inhaler well for 5 seconds. Breathe out. Put the inhaler in your mouth behind your teeth and above your tongue.
4. Take a slow deep breath in and at the same time spray the inhaler ONCE. Breathe in for 3-5 seconds.





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5. Hold your breath for 10 seconds.
6. Repeat steps 3, 4, and 5 if your provider has told you to take more than one puff of your medicine. If you're using a quick reliever, you should wait 10-15 seconds before taking your next puff. If you're using a long-term controller, you don't need to wait between puffs.

What is priming?

Priming makes sure the right amount of medicine comes out of your inhaler when you use it. How you prime your inhaler depends on what kind of inhaler you have. Follow the instructions that came with your inhaler. If you have any questions, ask your provider or pharmacist.

SOURCE:

The Expert Panel Report 3 Full Report 2007: Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma (EPR-3). NIH Publication No. 07-4051 Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; National Institutes of Health; National Heart, Lung, & Blood Institute; National Asthma Education and Prevention Program, 2007.



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