

Using a Home Nebulizer

For Patients with Asthma

What is a nebulizer?

A nebulizer (breathing machine) changes asthma medicine from a liquid to a mist, so it can be breathed into the lungs.

Nebulizers are helpful to anyone who can't use an inhaler with a chamber. This includes infants and small children.

How do I get one?

Your doctor must prescribe your nebulizer. You may buy or rent it from a medical supplier. Costs will vary.

Call your insurance company to make sure they will pay for the nebulizer. They may require you to work with a specific supplier.

How do I use it?

Your nebulizer will have the following parts:

- Main unit
- Cup
- Mask or mouthpiece
- Tubing

1. Place the unit on a sturdy surface. Plug the cord into a three-prong outlet.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water. Dry your hands well.
3. Measure the medicines just as your nurse showed you. Use a separate, clean measuring device for each medicine. (If you are using single-dose vials, you don't need to measure.)
4. Put the medicines into the cup.
5. Attach the cup to the mask or mouthpiece.
6. Connect the tubing to the cup and main unit.
7. Turn on the unit. If you are using the mouthpiece, you should see a light mist coming from the back of the tube. If using a mask, the mist will come out through the mask.

continued

To breathe in the medicine

1. Sit up straight. If the treatment is for your child, he or she may sit on your lap.
 - If you are using a mask: Place it on the face. It should be comfortable and secure.
 - If you are using a mouthpiece: Place it between the teeth. Seal the lips around the mouthpiece.
2. Take slow, deep breaths. If possible, hold each breath for 2 to 3 seconds before breathing out. This allows the medicine to settle into the airways.
3. Keep breathing until the medicine is gone (about 10 minutes). The nebulizer will make a sputtering noise, and the cup will have just a little medicine left over.

If the medicine sticks to the sides of the cup, you may shake the cup to loosen the droplets.

How do I care for my nebulizer?

Nebulizer unit

Clean the unit when it looks dusty or dirty.

1. Unplug the unit from the wall.
2. Use a damp cloth to wipe the outside of the unit.

Medicine cup

Clean the medicine cup after each treatment.

1. Open the cup.
2. Rinse the medicine cup and refill it with clean water.
3. Run the unit for a few seconds to flush out any medicine that might be trapped in the cup.
4. Remove the tubing from the medicine cup.
5. Wash the cup in hot, soapy water or in the top rack of your dishwasher. Shake off the excess water and allow it to air dry.
6. Store the unit in a clean place when it's not in use.

Filters

Check the filter weekly. Replace it once a month or when it gets dirty. See your owner's manual for more on the care of filters.

If you have any questions about using, cleaning or caring for your equipment, please call your medical supplier.