

Using a Metered-dose Inhaler

For Patients with Asthma

What is an MDI?

A metered-dose inhaler (MDI) is used to take asthma medicine. If you use it with a holding chamber, you will get more medicine into your lungs.

How do I use it?

Your MDI will have two or three parts.

- The inhaler (canister that holds the medicine).
- A holding chamber, which makes it easier to use your inhaler.
- A facemask, which may or may not be used with the chamber.

If the inhaler has never been used, or you go a week or more without using it, you must prime the inhaler. To do this, push down on the inhaler two times. This will not count as a dose of medicine.

Using the inhaler with the chamber

1. Shake the inhaler four or five times.
2. Insert the inhaler into the rubber seal at the end of the chamber.
3. Stand or sit up straight. Breathe out.
4. Place the mouthpiece between the teeth. Seal the lips around the mouthpiece. Press down on the inhaler one time.

5. Take one slow, deep breath. Hold the breath for 10 seconds. If you cannot hold the breath, take three to five slow breaths instead.
6. If more puffs are prescribed, wait one minute. Shake the inhaler again and repeat steps 4 and 5.

Using the inhaler with the chamber and mask

1. Shake the inhaler four or five times.
2. Insert the inhaler into the rubber seal at the end of the chamber. Attach the mask to the mouthpiece.
3. Stand or sit up straight. If the treatment is for a small child, he or she should sit on your lap.
4. Cover both the nose and mouth with the mask. Press the mask firmly against the face. Make sure there is a good seal so no air leaks out. This will get all of the medicine into the lungs.
5. Press down on the inhaler one time.
6. Take six slow, deep breaths. For a small child, hold the mask and allow the child to breathe in and out six times. It's okay if your child cries.
7. If more puffs are prescribed, wait one minute. Shake the inhaler again and repeat steps 4 through 6.

continued

How do I clean the chamber and the mask?

Clean the chamber and mask when they look dirty.
Replace them when they crack or no longer work well.

If your chamber has no valve:

1. Pull the caps off the holding chamber.
2. Wash the chamber and mask in warm water with mild soap. Rinse all parts. Shake out the water and let the parts dry.

**If your chamber has a valve
(OptiChamber, Aero Chamber):**

1. Pull the caps off the holding chamber.
2. Remove the mouthpiece: Turn the mouthpiece counter-clockwise until it unlocks and pulls off.
3. Remove the valve from the small posts on the end of the chamber.
4. Wash all parts in warm water with mild soap. Rinse all parts. Shake out the water and let the parts dry.
5. Put it back together. Make sure the one-way valve is seated firmly on the clear posts. Place the mouthpiece on the chamber and turn clockwise until it snaps in place.
6. To replace the end cap on the chamber: Place the inhaler on a solid surface and push down firmly to seal the cap.

How do I know when to order more medicine?

If you keep track of your doses, you'll know when to re-order your medicine.

Tracking long-term medicines (taken every day)

1. Place a blank label around the boot of the inhaler.
2. Read the label on the inhaler to see how many puffs it holds.
3. Divide the total number of puffs by the number of puffs taken each day.

Example: If the inhaler holds 120 puffs, and you take 4 puffs per day, you would have a 30-day supply of medicine ($120 \div 4 = 30$).

4. Write the refill date on the blank label. The refill date should be five days before the medicine runs out.

Example: If the medicine will last 30 days, and you start using it on June 1, your refill date is June 25.

Tracking quick-relief medicines (taken as needed)

1. Place a blank label around the boot of the inhaler.
2. Read the label on the inhaler to see how many puffs it holds.
3. Write the number of puffs on the blank label. Also write the date you start using the medicine.
4. Make a hash mark (/) for each puff you use. (Include wasted puffs.)
5. Get a refill when 10 puffs are left.