



# THE RIGHT WAY TO USE INHALERS



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### WHAT IS AN INHALER?

Inhalers are hand-held devices that help deliver medication directly into your lungs. A very effective way of treating breathing problems including asthma; inhalers dispense pressurized metered doses of medication from the aerosol canister, through the mouthpiece or valved holding chamber.

### THE RIGHT WAY TO USE INHALERS

Using an inhaler is quite simple once you get used to it. All you need is to learn how to use an inhaler, the right way.

To begin with, read the instruction booklet/ how to use manual that comes along with the inhaler carefully.

The booklet explain in detail, with diagrams, as to how you should use the inhaler, including the right way to hold it, positioning your head and frequency between consecutive “puffs” (inhaling the medicine).

Inhalers are of two types: Inhalers with valved holding chamber and inhalers without chamber (compact inhalers).

Before beginning to use the inhaler, you should ‘prime’ it or make it ready for use.

### PRIMING THE INHALER

- Priming is the process of spraying/ dispensing one or more doses of the medicine into the air before actual use
- This will ready the inhaler for continued use and help dispense the right dose of medication
- The priming process will be different for each medication/ inhaler; so make sure you read the instructions booklet carefully before use

### HOW TO USE:

#### INHALERS WITH VALVED CHAMBER

1. Remove the cap from the inhaler and chamber

2. Insert the inhaler into the open end of the chamber (opposite the mouthpiece)
3. Keep you chin up
4. Breathe out fully
5. Place the mouthpiece of the chamber between your teeth and seal your lips tightly around it (do not bite)
6. Press the canister once
7. Breathe in slowly through your mouth, fully (fill your lungs)
8. If you hear a horn-like sound, you are breathing too quickly and need to slow down
9. Hold your breath for 10 seconds (or count till 10 in your mind) in order to allow the medication to reach the airways of your lungs
10. Repeat steps 2-8 for each “puff”/ as many inhalations instructed by your doctor
11. Replace the cap on your inhaler, when you finish the process



### HOW TO USE:

#### INHALER WITHOUT CHAMBER

1. Remove the cap from the inhaler and shake well for 5 seconds
2. Breathe out fully



3. Keep your chin up
4. Place the mouthpiece of the inhaler between your teeth and seal your lips tightly around it (do not bite)
5. Breathe in slowly
6. Press down the canister (only once) while you are breathing
7. Keep breathing in slowly till you fill your lungs with air (it should take about 5 to 7 seconds)
8. Hold your breath for 10 seconds (or count till 10 in your mind) to allow the medication to reach the airways of your lungs
9. Wait for one minute before you take the next puff
10. Repeat steps 2-8 for each “puff”/ as many inhalations instructed by your doctor
11. Replace the cap on the inhaler, when you finish the process

### HOW TO CLEAN THE INHALER

- It is very important to clean your inhaler periodically (once a week) to prevent infections and ensure proper working
  - Read what the instructions leaflet says about cleaning the inhaler and follow the exact same procedure
  - Never dip/ wash the aerosol medicine canister in water
  - In most cases, cleaning the inhaler involves the following steps:
1. Remove the metal canister (you might need to pull it out)
  2. Clean the plastic parts of the device using mild soap and water (once a week)
  3. Allow the plastic parts to air dry (you may wash it and leave it to dry overnight)
  4. Put together the inhaler
  5. Test the inhaler by spraying a dose into the air
  6. Any other medications on the inhaler

should be cleaned by wiping the mouthpiece with a cloth/ dry cotton swab

### HOW TO CLEAN THE VALVED CHAMBER

1. Clean the chamber once a week
2. Remove the soft ring at the end of the chamber
3. Soak the ring as well as chamber in warm water mixed with a mild detergent
4. Clean, rinse in clear water and shake well
5. Allow to air dry completely

### HOW TO CHECK YOUR INHALER

- Though most devices have a built-in meter that tells you how much medicine is left; it is important to keep track of the amount of medication remaining and have a clear idea as to when you will need to replace the canister.
- Always replace the canister when the dose meter shows zero
- The number of “puffs”/ inhalations contained in your inhaler will be printed on the side of the canister
- If you use an inhaler every day, you can find out how long it will last by dividing the total number of puffs in the inhaler by the total puffs you need to take every day. Example: 2 puffs x 2 times / day = 4 total puffs/ day.
- So if the canister contains 120 puffs, the inhaler can be used for 30 days until replacement
- If you use the inhaler only when needed, maintain a record of when/ how many times you have used it.
- There are counting devices that will help you keep track of your inhaler use. Ask your healthcare professional for more information/ advice.

### IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- Always follow the instructions on the user manual/ user leaflet
- Store the inhaler in a dry, dust-free, clean place
- If the canister gets cold, warm it between your palms to bring it to room temperature (warning: never ever heat the canister using any other means)
- Keep your inhaler in a place where it is easily accessible
- Keep away from the reach of children
- Demonstrate how you use the inhaler to your doctor/ healthcare provider to make sure you are doing it the right way
- Doctors may suggest use of spacer or a holding device to use the inhaler effectively
- Write the start date of use on the canister so that you can keep track of the usage
- Always check the expiry date mentioned on the canister; ignoring this can lead to fatal after-effects
- If you are not able to use an inhaler, ask your doctor for suitable replacement treatment method
- Do not soak the entire inhaler or medicine canister in water
- Do not puncture/ burn the canister
- Clean the inhaler periodically
- If you notice any aggravation of symptoms/ discomfort after using the inhaler, seek immediate medical help