

Correct Use of a Metered-Dose Inhaler

How do I find out how much medicine is in the canister?

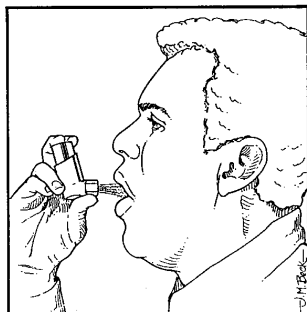
It is important to make sure that the canister holds enough medicine. If the canister has been used often, it might be empty. (Check the label to see how many inhalations should be in each canister.) To find out how much medicine is left in the canister, put the canister (without the mouthpiece) in a container of water. If the canister sinks to the bottom, it is full. If the canister floats sideways on the surface, it is empty.

How do I use the inhaler?

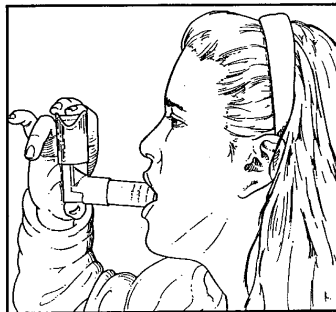
1. Remove the cap and hold the inhaler upright.
2. Shake the inhaler.
3. Tilt your head back slightly and breathe out.
4. Hold the inhaler as in one of the pictures below: A is the best way, but C is okay for people who are unable to use A or B.

Spacers are useful for all patients. (See picture B.) They are very helpful for young children and older adults. They are also helpful to use with inhaled steroid medicines.

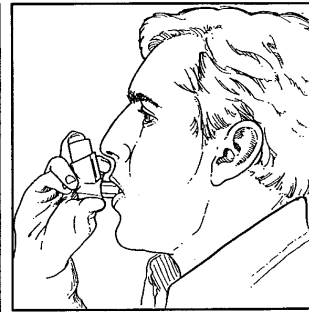
5. Press down on the inhaler to release the medicine as you start to breathe in slowly.
6. Breathe in *slowly* for three to five seconds.
7. *Hold* your breath for 10 seconds to allow medicine to go deeply into your lungs.



A. Open mouth. Hold inhaler one to two inches away.



B. Use spacer attached to inhaler.



C. Hold inhaler in your mouth.

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8. Repeat puffs as directed. Wait one minute between puffs to allow the second puff to get into the lungs better.

NOTE: Inhaled dry powder capsules are used differently. To use a dry powder inhaler, close your mouth tightly around the mouthpiece of the inhaler and breathe in quickly.



This handout provides a general overview on this topic and may not apply to everyone. To find out if this handout applies to you and to get more information on this subject, talk to your family doctor.

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