

How to Use a Metered Dose Inhaler

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A metered dose inhaler may be prescribed by your doctor for many reasons. The most common diagnoses include asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema. One of the most commonly prescribed medications in inhaler form is albuterol, which is in the metered dose inhaler form. Your doctor may prescribe several other types of inhalers, which are also in the form of a metered dose inhaler. These other metered dose inhalers include, but are not limited to: AeroBid, Atrovent, Azmacort, Combivent, Intal, and Flovent. Other inhalers have different dosing mechanisms, such as Advair, Flovent Rotadisk, Foradil, and Seravent Diskus. You should always read the instructions that accompany your particular medication. You **must** use a spacer with any metered dose inhaler. The spacer should be provided at the time you receive your metered dose inhaler. If you have further questions regarding the use of your inhaler, you should call your physician's office or your pharmacy to receive more detailed instructions.

If you have been prescribed a metered dose inhaler, you should use the following steps to ensure proper usage.

1. Shake the inhaler well before each puff.
2. Remove the caps from the inhaler and from the spacer mouthpiece.
3. Holding the inhaler in an upright position, insert the mouthpiece of the inhaler into the spacer.
4. Put the spacer mouthpiece into your mouth between your teeth. Seal your lips around the mouthpiece. (If the inhaler is prescribed to a small child, attach the mask to the mouthpiece. The mask should be placed snugly over the child's mouth and nose.)
5. Stand up straight and, when ready, slowly breathe all the air out of your lungs.
6. Press down on the metal canister to release one puff of the medication. Immediately begin to breathe in slowly, keeping your mouth sealed on the spacer mouthpiece.
7. Continue to breathe in deeply until you can no longer breathe in any more air or medicine.
8. Hold your breath for five to ten seconds. With your lips still sealed around the spacer mouthpiece, breathe out slowly.
9. Breathe in the air from the spacer one more time. (This air will still contain a significant amount of medication.)
10. Hold your breath again for five to ten seconds. Remove the spacer mouthpiece from your lips and begin to breathe normally.
11. If you are instructed to take more than one puff, wait one to two minutes between puffs. Then, repeat steps 4 through 10.

12. When finished, rinse your mouth with water, and spit. Follow the directions included in the package insert on how to clean and store your inhaler and spacer.

CAUTION:

The contents of a metered dose inhaler are under pressure. Do not use near an open flame. Most inhalers should be stored at room temperature – please see your particular inhaler’s storage instructions.

Reference

1. Feather, D. J., Halwig, J. M., Kerckmar, C. M., & Singletary-Schuster, A. A. M. (2000). Kids Breathe Free!: A Parent’s Guide for Treating Children with Asthma. Atlanta: Pritchett & Hull.