



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Tips and Suggestions for Taking Asthma Medicine

Here are some expert tips to help encourage and improve your child's experience when taking asthma medicine.

Basic instruction

- Have your child sit or stand upright in a comfortable place.
- Keep your child's head up and their chin parallel to the ground.
- Use a spacer with an inhaler, as directed, to help the medicine reach deep into your child's lungs.

Choice and control

- Find ways for your child to participate in taking their medicine.
 - For example, "Would you like to hold your mask, or would you like me to hold your mask while you take your medicine?"
- Be matter-of-fact when you remind your child that taking medicine is not a choice. It is something that helps their body stay healthy.
 - For example, "It's time to take your medicine", instead of "Do you want to take your medicine?"
- Offer your child a choice of distraction.
 - For example, "What would you like to do while you have your breathing treatment?"

Set the environment

- Use distraction, such as TV or games, during longer treatments, like nebulizer treatments.

- Give a time limit or set a timer. Some treatments can take up to 15 minutes.
- Set a routine, such as taking medicine at the same time or in the same place, as they are needed.

Language

- Use simple and familiar words when talking about their asthma and medicines
 - Find instructions on your child’s specific asthma medicine sheet. Ask your provider if you do not have this information.
- Explain to your child why they need the medicine and about asthma.
 - For example, “Your medicine will help make it easier for you to breathe, even if you are not having trouble breathing right now,” or “Your medicine helps keep asthma episodes away.”
 - Ask your provider for support from a Child Life Specialist who can suggest helpful language.
- Use praise to encourage desired behaviors.
 - Say something like, “Great job sitting up straight and taking deep breaths!”
- Avoid using phrases, like “be a big girl/boy.” This can make a child feel discouraged or disappointed if they cannot complete the task. It can also make it harder to get them to take their medicine in the future.

Incentives

- Use first/then statements with an incentive (if your child does well with rewards)
 - For example, “First, you take this medicine, then you can...”
 - Incentive ideas include stickers for an asthma diary, small prizes or a choice of a fun activity.

Other tips

- Know your child’s triggers and use visual aids to help explain them to your child.
- Share the care plan, familiar language and action steps with the school.
- Download the myChildren’s Mobile App.
- Use a tracking system, like an asthma diary.
- Take short breaks, with a timer, if you or your child become upset or frustrated.

Remember to be patient and consistent. Focus on successes. This may look different for each family and child. It is important to find what works best for your situation.