



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
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Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Inhalers: Spacers

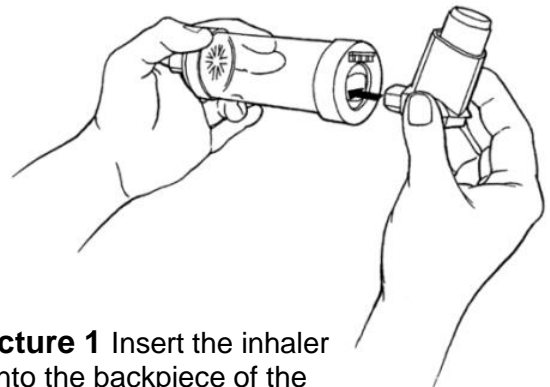
Many medicines that help make breathing easier are taken by an inhaler. The inhaler must be used the right way, or the medicine will not get into the lungs to make your child feel better. A spacer is a device that helps the medicine get into the lungs. It holds the medicine from the inhaler until the person starts to breathe in. When the person breathes in, the medicine is pulled into the lungs. **Always use a spacer, no matter your child's age.**

There are many types of spacers that may work a little differently. This handout covers the type of spacer used at this hospital. If your spacer is different than the one described here, ask a health care provider, respiratory therapist or pharmacist how to use it. Follow the directions for the spacer your health care provider recommends.

IMPORTANT: Do not take more of this medicine than your health care provider prescribed. If you have any questions, or the inhaler(s) is not helping as you think it should, contact your health care provider.

How to use

1. Check to make sure the spacer is clean. Please see how to clean the spacer on page 2.
2. Remove the cap from the inhaler and the mouthpiece of the spacer. If the inhaler is new and has never been used, make sure to prime or waste the inhaler so the medicine will come out. To prime the inhaler, shake it and then push down on it 4 times. Spray the medicine into the air.
3. Put the mouthpiece of the inhaler into the backpiece that looks like a rubber ring at the end of the spacer (Picture 1).
4. Hold the spacer and inhaler firmly. Shake it briskly for 10 seconds.
5. Turn your head to the side and breathe out your air.



Picture 1 Insert the inhaler into the backpiece of the spacer.

6. Close your mouth around the mouthpiece of the spacer (Picture 2).
7. Press down firmly on the inhaler to release only one puff of medicine (Picture 2).
8. Breathe in **slowly and deeply** until you have taken a full breath. If you hear a whistling sound from the spacer, slow down. You are breathing too fast.
9. Hold your breath and count to 10 slowly. Then, breathe out slowly.
10. If the health care provider has ordered more than one puff, wait at least 60 seconds then repeat steps 4 through 9.



Picture 2 Press down to release one puff of medicine. Breathe in and hold your breath.

Cleaning the spacer

1. About once a week, remove the backpiece from the end that holds the inhaler. The backpiece looks like a rubber ring. **Do not remove the mouthpiece.**
2. Remove the protective mouthpiece cap.
3. Place the spacer and the backpiece in the dishwasher on the top rack OR soak all the pieces in a bowl filled with warm, soapy water. Use a dish soap detergent to loosen any dirt. Do not use a washcloth or brush to clean it.
4. To rinse, rotate the spacer and backpiece in a bowl of clean, warm water using a gentle motion (Picture 3). Do not use running water. Water pressure could ruin the valve in the spacer.
5. Lightly shake away extra water and leave the pieces on a clean surface to air-dry. **Do not dry them by rubbing with a cloth.**
6. Make sure the spacer is completely dry. Attach the backpiece and mouthpiece cap.



Picture 3 Clean the spacer and backpiece once a week either by hand or in the top rack of the dishwasher.

Other advice

If the spacer is damaged or lost, please tell your child's health care provider. You can get a prescription for a new one. Spacers are available through most pharmacies and some provider's offices and clinics.