

KAREN R. BANKS-LINDNER, D.O, PLLC  
45-47 HALE ST  
NORWICH, N.Y. 13815

Phone: (607)-336-1749

## Correct Use of a Metered Dose Inhaler

Using a metered dose inhaler is a good way to take asthma medicines. There are few side effects because the medicine goes right to the lungs and not to other parts of the body. It takes only 5 to 10 minutes for the medicine to have an effect compared to liquid asthma medicines, which can take 1 to 3 hours. Inhalers can be used by all asthma patients age 5 and older. A spacer or holding chamber attached to the inhaler can help make taking the medicine easier for even younger children. These devices are helpful to people having trouble using an inhaler.

The inhaler must be cleaned often to prevent buildup that will clog it and reduce how well it works.

- \* The guidelines that follow will help you use the inhaler the right way.
- \* Ask your doctor or nurse to show you how to use the inhaler.

### Using 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. Use the inhaler in any one of these ways. (A is the best way, but C is okay if you are having trouble with A or B.)
  - A. Open mouth with inhaler 1 to 2 inches away
  - B. Use spacer
  - C. In the mouth
5. Press down on the inhaler to release the medicine as you start to breathe in slowly.
6. Breathe in *slowly* for 3 to 5 seconds.
7. *Hold* your breath for 10 seconds to allow the medicine to reach deeply into your lungs.
8. Repeat puffs as prescribed. Waiting 1 minute between puffs may permit the second puff to go deeper into the lungs.

**Note:** Dry powder capsules are used differently. To use a dry powder inhaler, close your mouth tightly around the mouthpiece and inhale very fast.

### Cleaning

1. Once a day clean the inhaler and cap by rinsing it in warm running water. Let it dry before you use it again. Have another inhaler to use while it is drying.
2. Twice a week wash the plastic mouthpiece with mild dishwashing soap and warm water. Rinse and dry well before putting it back.

### Checking How Much Medicine is Left in the Canister

1. If the canister is new, it is full.
2. An easy way to check the amount of medicine left in your metered dose inhaler is to place the canister in a container of water and observe the position it takes in the water. A full canister will lie flat at the bottom of the water. A 3/4 full canister will sit upright at the bottom of the water with the nozzle facing down. A 1/2 full canister will float upright in the water with the nozzle facing down. A 1/4 full canister will float at an angle with the nozzle toward the bottom of the water. An empty canister will float flat on the top of the water. *Note:* This method does not work for all inhalers. Please ask your doctor if you can check *your* inhaler this way.