

Spacers for Metered Dose Inhalers

Unless you use your inhaler right away, much of the medicine may end up on your tongue, on the back of your throat, or in the air. Use of the spacer or holding chamber can help this problem.

A spacer or holding chamber is a device that attaches to a metered dose inhaler. It holds the medicine in its chamber long enough for you to inhale it in one or two short breaths. The spacer makes it easy for you to use the medicine the right way (especially if your child is young or you have a hard time using the inhaler). It helps you not to cough when using an inhaler. A spacer will also prevent you from getting a yeast infection in your mouth (thrush) when taking inhaled steroid medicines.

There are many models of spacers or holding chambers that you can purchase through your pharmacist or medical supply company. Ask your doctor about the different models.

How to use the Spacer

1. Attach the inhaler to the spacer or holding chamber as explained by your doctor or by using the directions that came with the product.
2. Shake well.
3. Press the button on the inhaler. This will put one puff of the medicine in the holding chamber.
4. Place the mouthpiece of the spacer in your mouth and inhale slowly (a facemask may be helpful for a young child).
5. Hold your breath for a few seconds and then exhale. Repeat steps 4 and 5 two more times.
6. If your doctor has prescribed two puffs, wait between puffs for the amount of time he or she has directed and repeat steps 4 and 5.

Cleaning

1. Once a day clean the inhaler cap by rinsing in warm running water. Let it dry before you use it again. Have another inhaler to use while 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.

