

Correct use of Pressurized Multi-Dose Inhalers (pMDI) with a Spacer

Different types of inhalers are used in the management of lung diseases. In this information sheet, we will describe two common ways how to use inhalers with spacer. Correct use of inhalers will not only lead to improvement in your lung disease but also cause less side effects.

Single breath technique

1. Assemble the spacer if required
2. Shake the puffer held upright
3. Remove the cap off the inhaler and insert that end of inhaler into the spacer
4. Place the mouth/lips around the mouthpiece of the spacer, ensuring good seal
5. Breathe out in the spacer
6. Press the inhaler/canister, to release one dose of the puffer into the spacer
7. Breathe slowly in as much as possible, to draw the air and medicine from the spacer
8. Hold the breath in for 5-10 seconds
9. You can remove spacer from your mouth whilst holding breath
10. Breathe out after 5-10 seconds

If more than one inhalation is required, you can repeat the steps from 4-10. It is recommended to rinse, gargle and spit out if inhaled steroids are present in the puffer.

Multiple breath technique

1. Assemble the spacer if required.
2. Shake the puffer held upright
3. Remove the cap off the inhaler and insert that end of inhaler into the spacer
4. Place the mouth/lips around the mouthpiece of the spacer, ensuring good seal
5. Breathe out in the spacer
6. Press the inhaler/canister, to release one dose of the puffer into the spacer
7. Breathe in and out 4-5 times through the spacer, slightly deeper and slower than normal breaths
8. Replace the cap on the inhaler before storing it away from dust, heat and direct light

If more than one inhalation is required, you can repeat the steps from 4-10. It is recommended to rinse, gargle and spit out if inhaled steroids are present in the puffer.

How to wash/clean the spacer

A reusable spacer should be washed before first use and every 2-4 weeks afterwards or if it gets obvious residue built-up

1. Pull apart the spacer parts
2. Use soapy water to wash the spacer
3. Drip-dry the spacer
4. Do not use clothe to dry the spacer
5. Do not wash in the dishwasher

Dr G Sarwar Chaudhry

MBBS (KE), Fellow Royal Australasian College of Physicians (FRACP Australia),
Fellow American College of Chest Physicians (FCCP)
Conjoint Lecturer, University of Newcastle, NSW, Australia

Consultant Pulmonologist and Sleep Physician
Consultant General Physician www.australianpolyclinic.com