

Patient Information

Inhaler Technique with a Spacer

Children's Services



Introduction

The purpose of this leaflet is to explain the inhaler technique with a spacer, and provide tips to help.

What is a spacer?

A spacer is a plastic container which has a mouthpiece or facemask at one end and a hole for the inhaler to fit in at the other end.

There are several types of spacer. The most commonly used in this hospital are the **Aerochamber** and **Volumatic** devices.

An Aerochamber Spacer



A Volumatic Spacer



What are the benefits of using a spacer?

- Spacers make the giving of inhalers more effective.
- Many young children are unable to co-ordinate breathing correctly with administering the inhaler.
- More medication is able to get into your child's lungs than using the inhaler directly into the mouth.
- Reduces the likelihood of your child's mouth becoming sore.

How to use the inhaler with spacer device

1. Shake the inhaler (for new inhalers spray one puff into the air before step 2) and remove cap.
2. Place the inhaler into the end of the spacer.
3. Place the mouthpiece into the mouth or mask over the mouth and nose to create a seal.
4. If the child is able, allow them to breathe through the spacer to establish slow regular breathing.

5. Press the inhaler once to administer the medication.
6. Encourage your child to breathe five breaths slowly in and out to inhale the medication.
6. If further doses (puffs) of the inhaler are required repeat as above. Shake the inhaler in between puffs.
7. Replace the cap on the inhaler after use.

Helpful Hints and Tips

- Hold your child in a firm but gentle cuddle, swaddling them in a blanket to reduce wriggling.
- Count out loud with each breath to encourage slow regular breathing.
- It may be helpful to have a second person to assist with the giving of inhalers.
- Reward your child with star charts or stickers.

The Volumatic spacer should make a clicking sound for each good effective breath. If your child is unable to make the Volumatic click then place it at a 45-degree angle to open the valve or readjust the position of the mask, as this should allow the valve to open.

The Aerochamber should not make a noise. If it whistles the breath is too hard or fast. Watch for the plastic disk at the front of the facemask which should move with every breath.

Remember...

Your child may not like having their inhalers but it is important to remember that no matter how distressing, your child **needs** to have the medication.

It is better if your child is not crying when receiving the inhalers as the small airways of the lung collapse, which prevents the medication getting where it is supposed to be. **However**, this is not always possible.

Keep the inhalers with your child at all times.

Please remember that if your child comes back to hospital, to bring your child's inhaler and spacer with you.

Care of your spacer

- Wash your spacer in warm soapy water at least once every month.
- Leave to drip dry (do not use towels).
- Only put back together when completely dry.
- Replace the spacer every year (six monthly if used regularly).

Further information

NHS 111

☎ 111

or Contact your GP

NHS website - www.nhs.uk

Useful Telephone Numbers

Bluebell Ward, Lister Hospital
Stevenage

☎ 01438 284008

Children's Emergency Department
Lister Hospital

☎ 01438 284333

Urgent Care Centre, New QEII
Welwyn Garden City

☎ 01707 247549

Community Children's Nursing Team

☎ 01438 288370

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