

QuickAsthma Card

Secrets of Spacers/Holding Chambers

What is a spacer?

The secret's out...a spacer is a plastic attachment for your inhaler that makes it easier to use. It also helps the medication from your inhaler reach all the way to your lungs instead of getting caught in your mouth and throat. Some spacers have one-way valves to create holding chambers that trap the medication until it is inhaled. "Spacer" is the word most commonly used to describe this item that helps deliver medication to your lungs and prevents it from escaping into the air.

You need a spacer if:

- You use a corticosteroid inhaler.
 - You are having an asthma episode.
 - You have trouble pressing the inhaler and breathing at exactly the same time.
 - Your child who will use the device is 4 years or older.
- Younger children should use a spacer with a face mask.

Ask your healthcare professional if using a spacer will help you get the most from your medications.

It's no secret - cleaning your spacer is important!

Clean your spacer before using it for the first time and every week to two weeks after that, depending on use. Detach it from your inhaler, wash and rinse with mild soap and water. Drain and air dry only. Drying with a cloth creates static build-up that makes medication stick to the sides of some spacers.

Secrets of Using Your Spacer

1. Check to make sure your spacer is clear of any items that don't belong there.
2. Remove the mouthpiece, attach to your spacer and shake 4-5 times.
3. Close your lips firmly around the spacer mouthpiece, breathe out through your nose, press on the inhaler to release one puff of medicine and...
4. Immediately breathe in through your mouth, slowly and deeply until you have taken a full breath. Your spacer may have a whistle, which your healthcare professional would have told you about. If you hear the whistle, breathe in slower so you don't hear it.
5. Hold your breath for 5-10 seconds, then breathe out normally. Young children may need to take several breaths to empty the spacer of medicine. They should never exhale into the spacer. Repeat puffs, as recommended.

Important information about you, your inhaler and your spacer:

Your healthcare professional has prescribed an inhaler(s) to be used with a specific spacer. There is room below to note the number of puffs to be used on a regular basis, puffs to use during an asthma episode and who to call in case of an emergency. Fill it in now so you and those who care about you remember what to do.

MEDICATION #1 _____ NO. OF PUFFS _____
MEDICATION #2 _____ NO. OF PUFFS _____
IN AN EMERGENCY, USE _____ PUFFS OF _____
EMERGENCY CONTACT _____

Visit the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America website at www.aafa.org for more important details on allergies and asthma.

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