



... use a Metered Dose Inhaler (MDI or Puffer)

Using a puffer without a spacer is not recommended, but if a spacer is not available use this method. It is very important that you use the inhaler properly. Even when used correctly, only about 15% of the medicine gets into the lungs, with a lot of it collecting in the back of the throat. If you are not willing to use a spacer with your inhaler, talk to your health care provider, your pharmacist or your asthma educator about getting a different device for your asthma medications.



1. **Remove cap** from the puffer, check inside of inhaler and mouthpiece for presence of any foreign objects. Remove if there are any.

2. **Shake** the puffer very well. (15-30 seconds or 10 times)

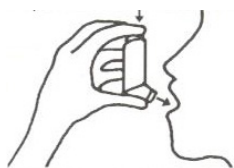
3. Hold the inhaler upright. Tilt head back slightly and keep the mouth wide open.



4. Breathe out normally, slowly, and fully.

5. Put the spacer between your teeth and close lips around mouthpiece.

6. Begin to **breathe in** slowly and **press** top of the puffer once. Continue to **breathe in steadily and deeply through your mouth** over a few seconds without stopping until a full breath is taken in.



7. **Hold breath for 10 seconds** or as long as possible. Remove inhaler and slowly **breathe out**.

8. If a second dose is ordered, wait 30 seconds before repeating steps 2-7.

9. **Rinse mouth** and gargle with water after using corticosteroids, including combination puffers. If possible, do not swallow the water.

Pictures "How to use a metered-dose inhaler", by National Heart, Blood, and Lung Institute, used under CC BY, cropped from the originals

- Always **check the expiry date** on the medication by removing the canister from the plastic sleeve.
- **Read the instructions that come with the metered dose inhaler.**
- When using the inhaler for the first time or when it has not been used for more than one week, you should make sure it is working properly by releasing 3 puffs into the air before taking a dose.

Dose counting

- Find out how many **doses** the inhaler contains. If your inhaler does not have a dose-counter, keep track of how many doses are remaining. The canister may still make a sound when you shake it even when there is no medication left.

Developed by the Department of Pharmacy and the Asthma Education Clinic with assistance from the Department of Learning & Development

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