

Using a Spacer with a Mask



Spacers are an excellent way of getting inhaled medication into the lungs.

1. Fit the spacer and mask together as necessary.
2. Remove the dust cap and shake the inhaler.
3. Fit the inhaler into the spacer.
4. Seat the child comfortably i.e. on your lap.
5. Place the mask over their nose and mouth.
6. Hold the spacer in a tilted position, like a baby's bottle, so that the valve is open (except for aerochambers which only opens on breathing in).
7. Press the inhaler once. Hold the spacer in place for 15-30 seconds or 5-10 movements of the valve. If the child breath-holds, gently tickling or singing may help.
8. If the child needs more puffs, repeat from step 4. Re-shake the inhaler if more than 1 puff is needed. Remember to only put 1 puff in at a time.
9. Offer a drink or brush the child's teeth and wipe around nose and mouth to remove particles.
10. You may choose to use the spacer when your child is asleep. If they have a dummy, it should be removed before using the spacer.



Cleaning:

Remove the inhaler from the spacer. Wash the spacer in warm water and washing-up liquid (once a week). Leave it to dry. Do not dry with a cloth as this can cause a build up of static. Make sure the valves open freely by tilting it or breathing in and out through it. Ask your GP for a new spacer if it is damaged or the valves are stiff (about every 6 to 12 months).

How will I know when the inhaler is empty?

Some inhalers are fitted with counters which indicate how many doses are left. If not, it can be difficult to tell when they are nearly empty. Shaking the canister gives some idea. When you get a new inhaler, look at the label to see how many puffs (actuations) it contains. Calculate when you are likely to need a new one and note this on your calendar. It is a good idea to have a spare.

Useful Contacts

Children's Respiratory Specialist Nurses
Jenny Lind Children's Hospital – 01603 287851

Asthma UK 0300 222 5800
www.asthma.org.uk

