

# UNIVERSITY OF UTAH ASTHMA CENTER



## How to use a metered dose inhaler with a spacer

A metered dose inhaler (MDI) is the most common way to take asthma medicine. An MDI is a device that releases a specific amount of medicine each time the canister is “actuated” or puffed. It is very important to learn the correct technique to use your inhaler. If the inhaler is used incorrectly, very little of the medicine will actually reach your lungs-most of it will just land in your mouth. Sometimes, your doctor will have you use a “spacer” device or holding chamber with your inhaler. This spacer increases the amount of medicine that gets down into your lungs. If you would like information on how to use a spacer, please ask us.

1. Stand or sit upright with your head and neck straight or tilted slightly back.
2. Remove the inhaler mouthpiece cap. If this is a new inhaler or it has been more than 2 days since you last used it, you must “prime” the inhaler first. To prime the inhaler, shake it very well, then spray 1 puff into the air. Your inhaler is now ready to use.
3. Connect your spacer to your inhaler (insert your inhaler mouthpiece into the end of your spacer or place the metal canister into the mouthpiece of the spacer).
4. Hold the canister with spacer upright and shake the inhaler with spacer well.
5. Breathe out normally through your mouth.
6. Put the spacer mouthpiece into your mouth, closing your lips tightly around it.
7. As you start to breathe in slowly, press down on the top of the inhaler firmly once. Continue to breathe in **slowly (over 3-5 seconds) and deeply** until your lungs are full of air.
8. Hold your breath for **5-10 seconds** or as long as you can and then exhale slowly.
9. If more than one puff is needed, wait **1 minute** before taking your next puff and repeat steps 1 through 9. NEVER do more than one puff at a time and remember to shake the inhaler before each puff.
10. After finishing all of your puffs of each inhaler, rinse your mouth out with water and spit. This washes out the extra medicine left in your mouth and decreases possible side effects.
11. Replace the inhaler and spacer mouthpiece caps after you are finished.

