

# Using Your Metered-Dose Inhaler

Using an inhaler seems simple, but many patients do not use it the right way. When you use your inhaler the wrong way, less medicine gets into your lungs. (You may be given other types of inhalers which have different instructions).

For the few days, read these steps aloud as you

do them or ask someone to read them to you. Your health practitioner can check how well you are using your inhaler.

Use your inhaler in one of the three ways pictured below (A or B are best, but C can be used if you have trouble with A and B).

## Steps for Using Your Inhaler

### Getting Ready

1. Take off the cap and shake the inhaler.
2. Breathe out all the way.
3. Hold your inhaler the way your health care provider said (A, B, or C below).

### Breathe in Slowly

4. As you start breathing in slowly through your mouth, press down on the inhaler one time. (If you use a holding chamber, first press down on the inhaler. Within 5 seconds, begin to breathe in slowly).
5. Keep breathing in slowly, as deeply as you can.

### Hold your breath

6. Hold your breath as you count to 10 slowly, if you can.
7. For inhaled quick-relief medicine (beta2-agonists), wait 2-5 minutes between puffs. There is no need to wait between puffs for other medicine.

<p>A. Hold inhaler 1 to 2 inches in front of your mouth (about the width of two fingers).</p>	<p>B. Use a spacer/holding chamber. These come in many shapes and can be useful to any patient.</p>	<p>C. Put the inhaler in your mouth. Do not use for steroids.</p>
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### Clean Your Inhaler as Needed:

Look at the hole where the medicine sprays out from your inhaler. If you see "powder" in or around the hole, clean the inhaler. Remove the metal canister from the L-shaped plastic mouthpiece. Rinse only the mouthpiece and cap in warm water. Let them dry overnight. In the morning, put the canister back inside. Put the cap on.

### Know When To Replace Your Inhaler:

For medicines you take each day (an example): Say your new canister has 200 puffs (number of puffs is listed on canister) and you are told to take 8 puffs per day.

\*\*8 puffs per day /200 puffs in canister = 25 days

So this canister will last 25 days. If you started using this inhaler on May 1, replace it on or before May 25<sup>th</sup>. You can write the date on your canister. For quick-relief medicines take as needed and count each puff. Do not put your canister in water to see if it is empty. This is not reliable.

