

Inhalers

Inhalers are used to deliver medication to the lungs in the form of a powder or aerosol. There are many types of inhalers many of which have different instructions for use. Read all the information in the packaging before assisting for the first time or use your mobile phone to access the QR code on this chart to see how-to-videos. Incorrect use of an inhaler may mean that the medication does not reach the lower airways where it is needed.

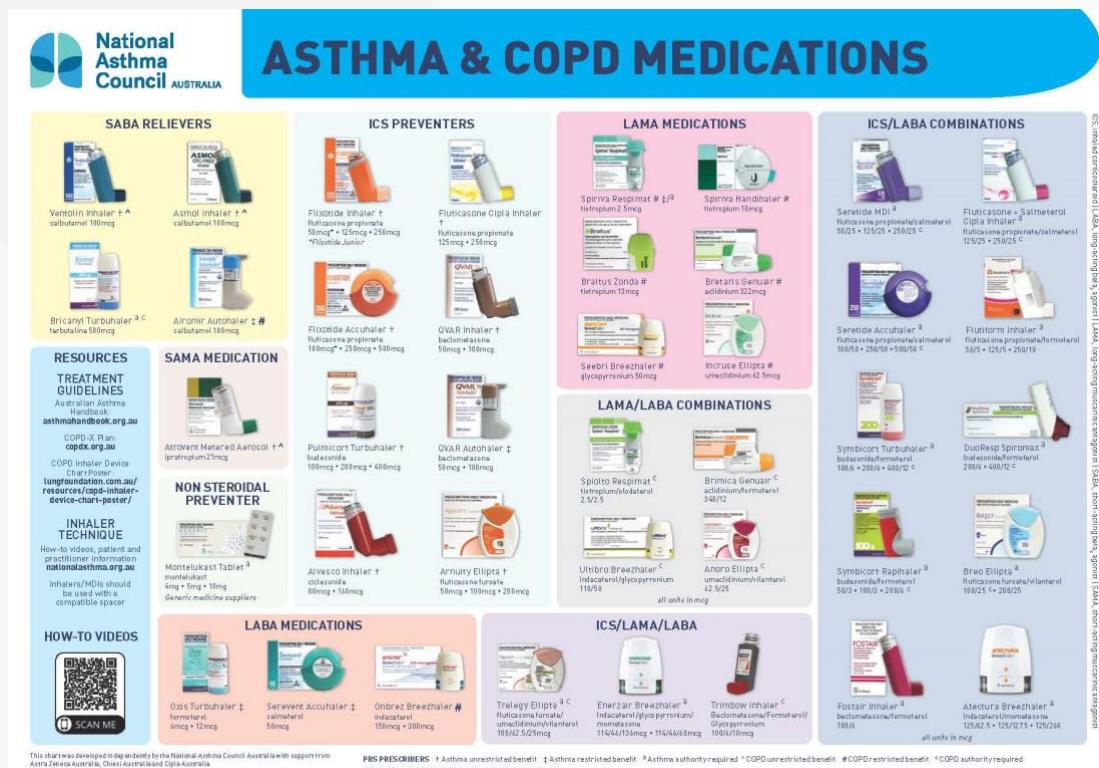


Figure 1 National Asthma Council Asthma and COPD Medications

Process

1. Perform hand hygiene and put on disposable gloves.
2. Prepare the inhaler (and spacer if the person is using one). This may mean checking the dose counter, shaking it well, removing the cap, putting in a capsule or disk, priming it, clicking a button or twisting the base and checking it is clean and free from dust or dirt—make sure you know how to prepare the inhaler you are assisting with.
3. Assist the person to sit up or stand and advise them on how to make the inhaler work –this may be to press a button, breathe in as normal or breathe in fast and sharp
4. Advise the person on how to best use the medication – this may be to take a deep breath before using the inhaler, breathe normally or hold their breath after using the inhaler.
5. If there is one, check the counter or capsule to make sure all the medicine has been taken
6. Store the device as recommended by the manufacturer

7. Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.

Inhaler technique

Device-specific checklists

Use these checklists to teach, check and/or confirm the way your patients use their inhalers. Assess patients' inhaler technique at every opportunity.

| General tips for inhalers | Pressurised metered-dose inhaler (pMDI) | pMDI & spacer | Accuhaler | Autohaler | Breezhaler |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Turbuhalers, Respirimat and pMDI devices should be primed before they are used for the first time. ► For inhalers with a dose counter, it is important to check there are sufficient doses remaining in the inhaler before each use. ► For the Respirimat inhaler, ensure the cartridge has been loaded into the device before using the inhaler for the first time. ► All pMDIs should be shaken before each dose. Do not shake dry powder inhalers (DPIs). ► For all types of inhalers, it is important to keep the chin tilted up so the medicine reaches the lungs effectively. ► After use, wipe down the mouthpiece of the inhaler with a dry cloth. ► For inhalers containing corticosteroids, it is important to rinse the mouth out with water after using the inhaler to remove any residual medicine. This will reduce the likelihood of voice changes and oral thrush. |  |  |  |  |  |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove inhaler cap 2. Hold inhaler upright and shake well 3. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler 4. Put mouthpiece between teeth without biting and close lips to form a good seal 5. Breathe in slowly through the mouth and, at the same time, press down firmly on canister once 6. Keep breathing in slowly and deeply and hold breath for about 5 seconds or as long as comfortable 7. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth 8. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler 9. If an extra dose is needed, repeat steps 2 to 8 10. Replace cap | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare the spacer* 2. Remove inhaler cap 3. Hold inhaler upright and shake well before inserting into spacer 4. Put mouthpiece between teeth without biting and close lips to form a good seal 5. Breathe out gently, into the spacer 6. Hold spacer level and press down firmly on inhaler canister once 7. Single breath: Breathe in slowly and deeply and hold breath for around 5 seconds or as long as comfortable. Take spacer out of mouth while holding breath OR 8. Tidal breath:** Breathe in and out normally for 3 or 4 breaths before removing spacer from the mouth 9. Breathe out gently 10. Remove inhaler from spacer 11. If an extra dose is needed, repeat steps 3 to 9 12. Replace cap on inhaler | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open cover using thumb grip 2. Hold horizontally, load dose by sliding lever until it clicks 3. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler 4. Place mouthpiece in mouth and close lips to form a good seal, keep inhaler horizontal 5. Breathe in steadily and deeply 6. Hold breath for about 5 seconds or as long as comfortable 7. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth 8. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler 9. If an extra dose is needed* repeat steps 2 to 8 10. Close cover to click shut | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove cap 2. Hold inhaler upright and shake well 3. Push lever up 4. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler 5. Put mouthpiece between teeth without biting and close lips to form a good seal 6. Breathe in steadily and deeply 7. Keep breathing in after hearing click 8. Hold breath for about 5 seconds or as long as comfortable 9. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler 10. Push lever down 11. If an extra dose is needed, repeat steps 2 to 10 12. Replace cap | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove cap 2. Flip mouthpiece to open 3. Remove capsule from blister and place in chamber 4. Close mouthpiece until it clicks 5. Press side buttons in once and release (do not shake) 6. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler 7. Put mouthpiece between teeth without biting and close lips to form good seal 8. Breathe in quickly and steadily, so capsule vibrates 9. Hold breath for about 5 seconds, or as long as comfortable 10. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth 11. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler 12. Open mouthpiece and remove capsule 13. If more than one dose is needed*, repeat steps 3 to 12 14. Close mouthpiece and cap |

* New plastic spacers should be prewashed in warm water and dishwashing detergent (without rinsing), and air-dried before first use.
** Tidal breathing recommended for young children and during acute flare ups.
* Not usually appropriate for medicines delivered by this device.

Risks/Considerations

- ⚠ Always follow the instructions to prime a new inhaler if needed to ensure the person gets a full dose
- ⚠ Watch the person to ensure they are using the inhaler correctly at every opportunity; this check-list can be used to assess patients' inhaler technique. There should be no escape of medication from the sides of the mouth. Escalate all concerns.

Figure 2 National Asthma Council Inhaler Technique Checklist

- ⚠ Capsules for use in Handihaler® devices should not be pushed through the foil as it may damage them, carefully peel back the foil to remove