

Common inhaler devices

Metred dose inhalers (MDI's)



- Always use with a spacer (both adults and children) – this gives you the most medication into the lungs where it's needed. NB: When you use this inhaler without a spacer, the most medication you will get is 15%, even with the very best technique
- Small and easy to carry around (can also use the inside of the spacer as a container to carry)
- Shake before each puff
- 1 puff of inhaler into the spacer and take 6 breaths.
Pro tip: Never spray more than one puff into the spacer at a time as the molecules clump up and they are too big to inhale into our small airways.
- Shake inhaler between each puff
- Never use MDIs to empty (unless they have a dose counter) as they contain more propellant than medication

Dry Powder Inhalers (DPI's)



- Do not require a spacer and easy to use
- Have a dose counter so you know when its almost empty
- If using Symbicort as a reliever inhaler, this is easy to carry around in your pocket or bag
- Do not contain propellants
- Each device has a different technique – see our website for detailed videos and instructions or speak to your health care provider.

Salbutamol First Aid



- 1.**
Sit the person upright. Be calm and reassuring.
Do not leave them alone.
- 2.**
Give 6 puffs of reliever medication. 1 puff at a time to 6 breaths. Shake inhaler between each puff.
- 3.**
Wait 6 minutes.
- 4.**
Repeat steps 1-3
- 5.**
If there is no improvement after the 2nd lot of reliever, dial 111 for an ambulance and keep giving 6 puffs every 6 minutes until help arrives.

Symbicort First Aid



- 1.**
Sit the person upright. Be calm and reassuring.
Do not leave them alone.
- 2.**
Give 1 actuation (puff) at a time, 1-2 minutes apart.
- 3.**
If there is no improvement after 4 actuations (<12yrs) or 6 actuations (>12yrs), dial 111 for an ambulance
- 4.**
Keep using your symbicort inhaler as often as you need until help arrives.
- 5.**
Even if you seem to get better, seek medical help right away.

asthma
NEW ZEALAND

Breathe **5**
Easy YEARS



ASTHMA MEDICATIONS

581 Mt Eden Road, Auckland 1024
PO Box 67066, Mt Eden, Auckland 1349

reception@asthma.org.nz • 0800 227 328

Reliever inhalers

- Salair
- Ventolin
- Bricanyl
- Symbicort (a combined 2 in 1 inhaler, used as both a preventer and reliever)
- Respigen

How they work

Reliever inhalers are not always blue

- Works a bit like a band aid – they help when you have symptoms but do not address the swelling inside the airway
- Work quickly within 2 to 5 minutes and effects last for up to 4 to 6 hours
- Relaxes the smooth muscles on the outside of the airway
- Relieve the symptoms of asthma (shortness of breath, tight chest, cough and wheeze)
- If asthma is well controlled, reliever inhaler use should not exceed 2 to 3 puffs per week
- Can use 15 minutes prior to physical activity (such as sports or fitness) to help reduce exercise induced asthma symptoms
- Only medication to be used in asthma emergencies
- Can be used when unwell with a cold (but you need to speak with your doctor first)
- Always use as prescribed
- Important to always carry one around with you wherever you go

Side effects

- Most people tolerate this medication well. But some people can experience tremors, headache, hyperactivity and a fast heartbeat/heart palpitations, although these are normally only present with over-use.

Preventer inhalers

(Contain Inhaled Corticosteroids or ICS) – The real hero of asthma

- Flixotide
- Beclazone
- Pulmicort
- Qvar

How they work

- Work on the inside of the airways, controlling swelling and mucous build-up
- The ICS mimics our bodies own naturally produced cortisol
- Minimises asthma being triggered
- Reduces risk of asthma attacks and hospitalisation
- Helps prevent long term damage to lungs (also known as airway remodelling)
- In order for them to work, they must be taken every day as prescribed, even when well
- Takes 2 to 6 weeks to see an improvement, so keep going and don't stop!
- **Of no use** in an emergency

Side effects

- Possible side effects include sore throat, hoarse voice and oral thrush
- In order to help prevent these side effects, ensure you use a spacer if using a metred dose inhaler (MDI) and rinse your mouth with water, gargle and spit out after use
- If a child is using a mask with the spacer, wipe around their mouth after preventer use

Combination Preventer inhalers

Inhalers (with ICS and long acting reliever)

- Seretide
- Breo
- Symbicort
- Vannair
- Duoresp Spiromax

How they work & side effects

- They work in the same way that 'ICS only' preventers work but also have an added long-acting reliever which works on the outside of the airway which makes them slightly different
- May be prescribed for those who:
 - Are not adequately managed using an 'ICS only' preventer inhaler, despite regular, consistent use
 - Experience night-time or exercise induced symptoms
- Same side effects as 'ICS only' preventer inhalers

Did you know that about 80% of people do not know how to use their inhalers correctly, contributing to poor asthma control?