

Spacers

Steps to prepare a spacer

- Always make sure to clean your reusable spacer before using it for the first time, and every 2-4 weeks after that (see **How do I clean a spacer?**).
- Some spacers can be taken apart for cleaning and assembled (put back together) to be used with an inhaler.



Steps for priming a pMDI

Before using your inhaler for the first time, you need to prime it. You also need to prime it if you haven't used it for 7 days.



1. Shake the inhaler well 4 or 5 times.
2. Remove the mouthpiece cap.
3. Point the inhaler away from you.
4. Press down on the top to release a test puff.
5. The number of test sprays you need to do depends on the type of inhaler you have, so make sure to check the instructions.

Steps for using a spacer

1. Prepare the spacer and prime the inhaler as needed (see **Steps to prepare a spacer** and **Steps for priming a pMDI**)
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 for a good seal
5. Breathe out gently, into the spacer until your lungs feel empty
6. Hold spacer level and press down firmly on inhaler canister once
7. Breathe in and out normally for 4 breaths before removing the spacer from the mouth. This is called **tidal breathing**
Alternatively, breathe in slowly and deeply for 1 breath and hold breath for about 5-10 seconds or as long as comfortable
8. Take spacer out of mouth while holding breath; breathe out gently, away from inhaler
9. Remove inhaler from spacer
10. If an extra dose is needed, repeat steps 3 to 9
11. Replace cap on inhaler

How do I clean and store a spacer?

New plastic spacers should be prewashed and air dried before first use, and every 2-4 weeks.

Following these cleaning steps will make sure there is less static build up inside of your spacer.

- Pull the apart the spacer (if it can be taken apart)
- **Handwash** it in warm water with dishwashing detergent. **DO NOT put the spacer in a dishwasher**
- **DO NOT RINSE** the spacer after washing it, even if it still looks soapy
- Allow the spacer to air dry. **DO NOT dry the spacer with a cloth**

What is a spacer?

A spacer is a plastic (or cardboard) tube that attaches to your inhaler.

Why should I use a spacer?

Spacers help deliver medicine directly into your lungs by making it easier to inhale the full dose. Spacers also help reduce coordination issues and side effects from some medicines, like hoarseness or oral thrush.

Who should use a spacer?

People of all ages should use a spacer whenever they use a pMDI. This is especially important for children and older adults.

How long does a spacer last?

You should check a reusable spacer every 6-12 months for cracks or other damage. Replace as needed.

If you have any questions about using a spacer or your inhaler, talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Your inhaler will come with instructions. Always read these instructions for important information on how to use it.