



Spacer devices for children

This leaflet is for parents and carers of children using a spacer device with their inhaler. It gives instructions on what spacer device is appropriate for children of different ages, how to use and look after it. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your doctor or asthma nurse specialist.

Aerochamber Infant Device with mask (Orange)



0-18 months

Aerochamber Child Device with mask (Yellow)



1 - 5 years

Aerochamber Plus with mask (Blue)



5+ years

Aerochamber Plus (Blue)



5+ years

Volumatic with Face Mask



0+ years

Volumatic



3+ years

What is a spacer?

A spacer is a plastic empty tube, which has a mouthpiece or facemask on one end and a hole for the aerosol inhaler to fit in on the other end. The most commonly used are the small 'Aerochamber' and the large 'Volumatic'.

The Aerochamber is a small colourful spacer that has a mask. The flap in the mask should move when your child breathes in and out.

The Volumatic is a large clear spacer that comes in two parts that fit together. A click should be heard when they breathe in and out.

Why does my child need a spacer?

- The spacer makes inhalers more effective by delivering more medicine to your child's lungs.
- It reduces the likelihood of your child's mouth becoming sore by reducing the risk of oral thrush.

How to use a spacer

1. Sit the child upright
2. Shake the inhaler vigorously about 5 times and remove cap
3. Fit the inhaler into the opening at the end of the spacer
4. Place mask over your child's face / place the mouthpiece between your child's lips, ensuring a good seal
5. Press the inhaler once and allow your child to take 5 slow tidal (normal breaths in and out without effort) breaths or count 10 seconds between each dose
6. Repeat steps 2-5 for every puff of inhaler required.
7. Place the cap back on inhaler after use

Cleaning

- Disconnect all parts of spacer
- Prepare a basin of warm water and add gentle detergent (washing up liquid) or sterilising solution
- Soak the all parts of spacer in warm water for 15 minutes
- Rinse **ONLY** the face mask thoroughly with warm water OR wipe **ONLY** the mouthpiece
 - ✗ **DO NOT** scrub the chamber of spacer
 - ✗ **DO NOT** rinse the chamber of spacer
 - ✗ **DO NOT** wipe the chamber of spacer to dry it
- Leave the parts to completely dry at room temperature
- Store spacer in a dry place or put back in carton
 - ✗ **DO NOT** store in sealed plastic
- Clean once or twice a week
- Whole spacer needs replacing every 6-12 months

Note: All "✗" creates an increase of static inside the chamber of spacer resulting in the medicine sticking to the sides of the chamber instead of travelling through to the lungs. Also, the thin layer of the gentle detergent left on the chamber of the spacer helps improve its performance.

Top tips for using an inhaler

- Count out loud to encourage slow, regular breathing
- Hold your child in a firm but gentle cuddle. An ideal position is sat on the floor with your child between your legs, in order to free up your hands to hold both the inhaler and your child
- It may often be helpful to have a second person to help with administering inhalers
- Be positive and smile, your child will sense if you are anxious too
- Reward your child after using the inhalers
- To make the experience more relaxed you could involve your child's teddies in inhaler giving or sit them in front of their favourite TV programme

Remember your child may not like having their inhalers but it is important to remember no matter how distressing, your child needs to have the medication.

Further information

<https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/conditions/asthma/child>

<https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/living-with/inhaler-videos>

References

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Rendel Awit, Paediatric Asthma Nurse Specialist, RBFT Paediatrics Department, October 2024
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