

Using an inhaler with a spacer

This leaflet is for parents and carers of children using a spacer device with their inhaler. It gives instructions on how to use and look after the spacer. If you have any questions or concerns that aren't answered in the leaflet, please speak to one of the nursing staff.

What is a spacer?

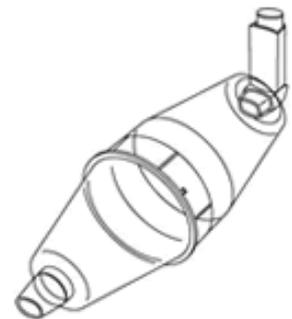
A spacer is a plastic container, which has a mouthpiece or facemask on one end and a hole for the aerosol inhaler to fit in on the other end. The most commonly used are the small 'Aerochamber' and the large 'Volumatic'.

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

The Volumatic is a large clear spacer which comes in two parts that must be fitted together. Children under three will need the mask fitted. Older children can use the mouth piece. 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.
- Reduces the likelihood of your child's mouth becoming sore by reducing the risk of oral thrush.



Looking after the spacer device

The spacer should be taken apart and washed inside regularly:

- Once a week if used daily
- Before each use if used infrequently.

The spacer should be washed with water and washing up liquid, rinsed and left to dry naturally. Washing spacers in this way stops the medicines sticking to the side.

Spacers should be replaced every year via your GP.

How to use a spacer with a mask

1. Remove mouthpiece from the inhaler.
2. Attach facemask to the spacer mouthpiece if child is under 3.
3. Shake the inhaler well and insert into the end of the spacer.
4. Tip the spacer to an angle of 45 degrees or more to enable the valve to remain open.
5. If your child is under 3 apply the mask to the child's face, ensuring as tight a seal as possible. If over 3 place the mouthpiece between your child's lips and get them to close their lips to create a seal.
6. Press the inhaler once to release a dose of the medication whilst keeping the mask on your child's face. Slowly count to ten out loud, trying to ensure ten breaths are taken.
7. Repeat steps 3-6 for every puff of inhaler required.
8. Replace the cap on inhaler after use.

Top tips for using an inhaler

- Count out loud to ten 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 inhalers.
- Inhalers can be given while your child is asleep.
- 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.

Contacting us

If you require any further advice please contact:

Paediatric Emergency Department: 0118 3226875 / 6876

More information about the Trust can be found on our website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

PAED_357 Reviewed by Laura Park SSN, Paediatric Emergency Department, September 2017
Review due: September 2019