

Metered-dose inhalers (MDIs)

Pressurised metered-dose inhalers (MDIs) are sometimes called aerosol inhalers or “puffers”.

The medicine is contained within a canister in a gas form, and housed by a small plastic inhaler device. This type of inhaler needs to be shaken immediately before use to ensure the medicine is mixed with the gas propellant before you use it.

When the inhaler is pressed, a measured dose of medicine is released from the canister, through the mouthpiece of the plastic inhaler.

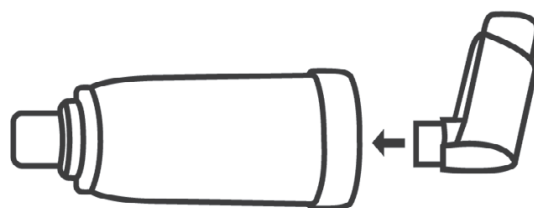
It is recommended that MDIs are used with a spacer - no matter what your age. Spacers improve the effectiveness of inhaled medications by increasing the deposition of medicine into the lungs, rather than in the mouth and throat.

Puffer inhalers are known to have a significant environmental impact. The carbon footprint of a 200-dose inhaler is equal to a 290km journey in a small car. Dry powder inhalers are a more environmentally friendly option. These inhalers may not be suitable for everyone, so it is important that you discuss your options with your healthcare practitioner.

How to use a metered-dose inhaler

1. Take off the cap and hold the inhaler upright.
2. Shake the inhaler to mix the medication with the propellant.
3. Fit the puffer inhaler into the spacer opening (opposite the mouthpiece).
4. Sit upright, tilt your head back slightly (as if you are sniffing).
5. Hold the device upright, insert the mouthpiece into your mouth ensuring that your lips firmly seal the mouthpiece of the spacer.
6. Press the puffer inhaler once only.
7. Take 4 to 6 normal breaths in and out through your mouth. (Do not remove the spacer from your mouth between breaths) OR take one slow deep breath in and hold this for 10 seconds.
8. Repeat steps 2 to 7 for further doses.
9. When finished, remove the inhaler from the spacer and place the cap back on the inhaler.

Note: Follow the instructions for how to use your inhaler device, contained on the patient information leaflet inside each pack.



Caring for your metered-dose inhaler

1. Clean your MDI weekly to ensure they do not block.
2. Remove the plastic mouthpiece cap.
3. Remove the metal canister (don't put it in water).
4. Rinse the mouthpiece and cap under warm water for at least 30 seconds.
5. Shake off any excess water and leave the mouthpiece and cap to dry overnight.
6. Put the metal canister back in, and replace the cap.

When to start a new metered-dose inhaler

As most MDIs don't have a dose counter window, it is wise to have a back-up inhaler on hand well before the inhaler is nearly empty.

For regularly scheduled inhalers taken every day, you can work out when your inhaler will be empty by calculating your daily dose from the date you first open each new inhaler. For example: two puffs twice a daily = 4 puffs per day; if the inhaler contains 120 doses in total, then you will finish your inhaler in 30 days - mark this date on your calendar.

For a useful 'How to use' video, visit the [National Asthma Council Australia](https://www.nationalasthma.org.au).