

## Metered Dose Inhaler (Without a Spacer)

Metered dose inhalers (MDIs) are useful in treating asthma and other respiratory diseases. An MDI has 2 parts:

- Canister.
- Curved mouthpiece.

These small, hand-held devices propel or send needed medicine directly to the lungs. But the medicine works only if the MDI is used in the right way. Use of an MDI may be only one part of your treatment. It is important to follow all of your doctor's directions. If you have asthma, this includes routine use of a peak flow meter and avoiding things that make your asthma worse.

### Dosage and Administration

Take only the number of doses (puffs) prescribed. Avoid the use of over-the-counter inhalers with your prescribed inhaler. If you are taking more than one inhaler, it is important to take them in the correct order. Be sure to discuss this with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

### Using the Inhaler

1. Put the inhaler together (as needed).
2. Shake the inhaler.
3. Remove the cap from the mouthpiece.
4. Hold the inhaler upright with your index finger on top and thumb on the bottom.
5. Exhale fully and gently through your mouth.
6. Position the inhaler.
  - For **open**-mouth inhalers, position the inhaler 1 to 2 inches away from your mouth.
  - For **closed**-mouth inhalers, position it comfortably in the mouth.

*Refill your  
inhaler  
medication as  
needed; do not  
wait until the  
canister  
is empty.*

7. Press down on the inhaler.
8. Inhale slowly and deeply for about 3 to 5 seconds as the medication is released from the inhaler.
9. Close your mouth, hold your breath for at least 10 seconds, then exhale.

Repeat the dose as ordered. Wait 30 to 60 seconds between doses or follow the package instructions. Wait at least 5 minutes between using 2 or more kinds of inhalers (i.e., bronchodilator, anticholinergics, corticosteroids, cromolyn).

### **Special Instructions**

- Breathe out before pressing your inhaler.
- Inhale slowly through your mouth, not your nose.
- Press down only once when using your inhaler. Wait at least 30 seconds to 1 minute between each puff.
- Breathe evenly and deeply.
- Refill your inhaler medication as needed; do not wait until the canister is empty.
- Contact your pharmacist or doctor right away if your inhaler is lost or broken.

### **Caring for Your Inhaler**

- Keep your inhaler clean. Wash the curved mouthpiece in warm, soapy water at least once a week. Dry carefully with a clean, lint-free cloth.
- Keep the cap on the mouthpiece when not in use.
- Do not share your inhaler with your family or friends.
- Always have a spare inhaler on hand.

### **When to Call the Doctor**

Contact your doctor if you:

- Do not get relief from your inhaler or you need to use your inhaler more often.
- Have shortness of breath not relieved by your inhaler.
- Have weakness, increased heart rate, shakiness, difficulty breathing, nervousness, headaches, nausea or vomiting.

If you have any questions about this or any other medicine, please ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

## Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the third floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the first floor of the Prentice Women's Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to [hlc@nmh.org](mailto:hlc@nmh.org).

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at [www.nmh.org](http://www.nmh.org).

*Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar a el departamento de representantes para pacientes al 312-926-3112.*

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