

## METERED DOSE INHALERS

### *Tips for Correct Use*

Take off the cap and shake the inhaler. If you're using a dry inhaler, just open it.

Breathe out all the way.

Hold the inhaler to your lips or as shown on the package insert.

If you are using a wet inhaler, as you start breathing in slowly through your mouth, press down on the inhaler. If you have a spacer attached to the inhaler, it can improve the effectiveness.

If you are using a dry powder inhaler, activate it so that the powder is ready to be inhaled. Put the mouthpiece to your lips and breathe in quickly.

Hold your breath as you count to 10 slowly, if you can.

Breathe out slowly.

If your prescription calls for another puff, wait about a minute, shake if you're using a wet inhaler, and repeat.

### *What to Do If You Have More than One Inhaler Prescription*

One inhaler medicine (a **bronchodilator**) relaxes and opens the breathing tubes.

Another medicine (an **anti-inflammatory**) decreases swelling and irritation.

**Always use the inhaler that opens the breathing tubes first (bronchodilator).**

If your prescription calls for more than one puff, wait about a minute, and shake between puffs if you're using a wet inhaler.

If your doctor has prescribed another inhaler, wait for 5 minutes before using it.

Your anti-inflammatory inhaler should be last.

If you have used an anti-inflammatory inhaler, always rinse your mouth with water and spit it out. Doing this will prevent yeast infections in your mouth.

### *Don't Run Out of Your Inhalers*

Your best breathing depends on using your inhalers as your doctor prescribed. Make sure that you always have enough medicine in your inhalers or you have a fresh refill on hand.

For inhalers that you use daily:

Your pharmacist can tell you how many days' supply is in each inhaler. When you start using a new inhaler write down the date it will be used up. Don't use it after that date, since the correct dose may not be delivered. To know how many puffs you have left in your inhaler, count the puffs you used.

For inhalers that you use when they're needed for symptoms:

Your pharmacist can tell you how many puffs are in each inhaler. Keep track of how many puffs you've used.

Some of the newer inhalers have counters on them so you'll always know.

Don't put the canister from your inhaler in water (the "float" test) to see if it's empty, that doesn't work.

### *Storage*

Always store your inhalers at room temperature or on your person if you are going out. Don't leave them in a car.

To see the full guidelines go to: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/asthmafullrpt.pdf>.

For additional information on this and other health issues, visit: MedlinePlus.gov