How to Use Your Metered-Dose Inhaler (MDI)

nova scotia
health

www.nshealth.ca

How to Use Your Metered-Dose Inhaler (MDI)

A metered-dose inhaler (MDI) is filled with medication that is under pressure. When you press the top of the MDI, it pushes out medication for you to inhale (breathe in).

To use an MDI:

1. Shake the MDI well (3 or 4 shakes) before using it.
2. Take off the cap.
3. Breathe out, away from the MDI.
4. Bring the MDI close to your mouth (about 1 to 2 inches away).
5. With your mouth open, start to breathe in **slowly**. Press the top of the MDI once and keep breathing in slowly until you have taken a full breath.
6. Close your mouth and hold your breath for about 10 seconds, or as long as you can. Then breathe out.
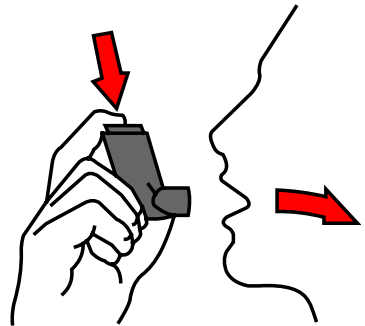
If you need more than one dose:
> › Take only one dose at a time. Wait for 30 seconds between each dose. Then shake the MDI well, and repeat steps 3 to 6.

After using your MDI:
> › **Rinse your mouth with water after using any maintenance MDI that contains a corticosteroid.**
> › Put the cap back on your MDI.
> › **Store your MDI at room temperature**.
> › Write down the number of doses you used.

What are your questions?
Please ask. We are here to help you.

Cleaning your MDI

To clean your MDI, follow the instructions that came with it. For most MDIs, you will:

1. Pull out the metal canister.
2. Clean the **plastic** parts using mild soap (like dish soap) and water. **Do not** wash the metal canister or put it in water.
3. Let the plastic parts air dry (for example, leave them out overnight). **Do not** use a cloth to dry them.
4. Put the MDI back together.
5. Test the MDI by releasing a dose into the air.

Canister

Mouthpiece

Cap
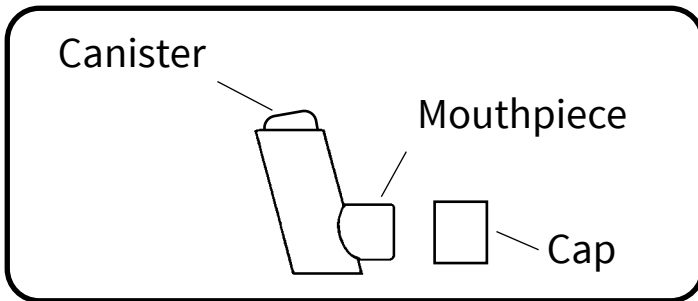
Tips for using your MDI

- Know when to use your **maintenance MDI** and when to use your **reliever or rescue MDI**.
- After using your **maintenance MDI**:
  › Rinse your mouth with water, gargle, and spit. **Do not swallow**.
- **Carry your reliever or rescue MDI with you at all times**.
- In cold weather, carry your MDI in a pocket close to your body.

Start date of inhaler: _____

                              YYYY/MM/DD

My MDIs:

Name	Number of doses	How often?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Examples of maintenance MDIs

Long-acting bronchodilators with corticosteroid

› Advair

› Zenhale®

› Breztri™ Aerosphere®

Inhaled corticosteroids

› Alvesco®

› Flovent

› Qvar RediHaler®

Examples of reliever or rescue MDIs

Short-acting bronchodilators

› Airomir® (salbutamol)

› Atrovent®

› Ventolin (salbutamol)

Remember

- Always follow the instructions that come with your MDI.

- Keep your reliever or rescue MDI somewhere where you can get it quickly if needed, but out of the reach of children and pets.

- Check the expiry date on your MDI before you use it.

- When you start using an MDI, write the start date on the canister.

- Store your MDI at room temperature. If it gets cold, warm it using **only** your hands. **Do not** use anything other than your hands to warm it.

- **Do not** puncture (make a hole in) or break the canister.

- Talk with your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner), pharmacist, respiratory therapist, nurse, or respiratory educator about your MDI. Show them how you are using it.
  › If you are having trouble using your MDI, ask your health care provider for tips, or to suggest another device.

- Many health care providers recommend using a spacer with an MDI. Ask your health care provider for more information.

If you think your MDI is empty:

- **Do not** float the canister in water.
- Shake it. If it feels light, or if you do not feel liquid moving, it is empty.
- If your MDI has a counter, 0 (zero) means it is empty.

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

Notes:

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: https://811.novascotia.ca

Prepared by: Pharmacy Department
Reviewed by: Respirology Clinic
Designed by: Nova Scotia Health Library Services

nova scotia
health