

# How to Use Your Metered-Dose Inhaler (MDI) With a Spacer Device

**Notes:**

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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.

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Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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*Designed by:* Nova Scotia Health Library Services

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- 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.

**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.

## 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

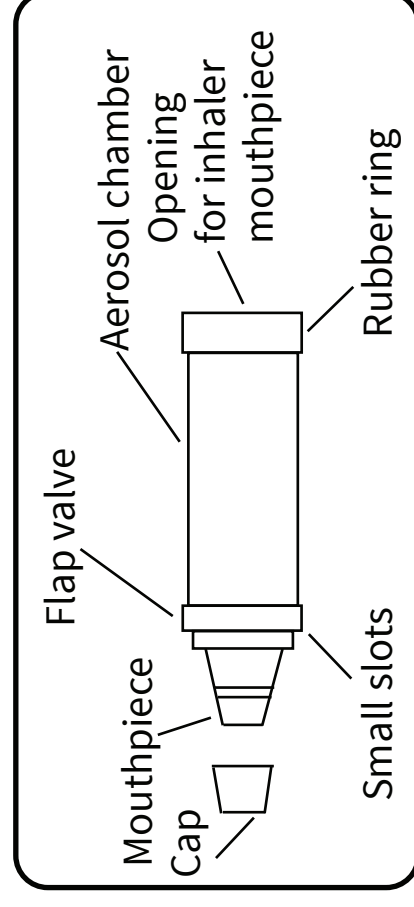
- › Airomir® (salbutamol)
- › Atrovent®
- › Ventolin (salbutamol)

## 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.

# How to Use Your Metered-Dose Inhaler (MDI) With a Spacer Device

- 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).
- **Always** use your MDI with a spacer device attachment. This device holds the medication in place and makes it easier to breathe in.
- You can buy a spacer device at most drugstores without a prescription. Some insurance plans cover the cost. If you can, compare the prices of spacers at different stores before buying.
- This pamphlet explains how to use and take care of your MDI and spacer device.

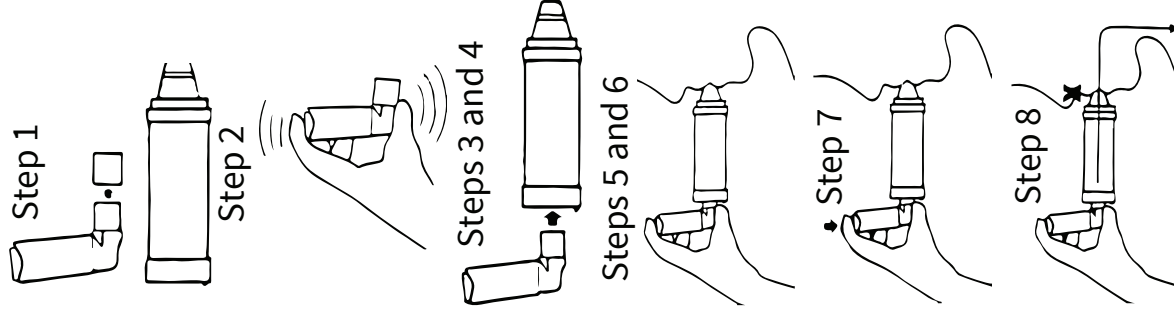


## How to use your MDI with a spacer device

There are 2 ways to use your MDI with a spacer device.

### Method 1

1. Make sure that the metal canister of the MDI is firmly inside the plastic cover.
2. Shake the MDI well.
3. Take the plastic caps off of the MDI and the spacer device.
4. Place the mouthpiece of the MDI into the opening of the spacer device.
5. Breathe out normally.
6. Put the mouthpiece of the spacer device into your mouth and seal your lips around it.
7. Press the MDI to spray the medication into the spacer device.
8. Take a slow, deep breath in over 5 seconds. Hold your breath for 10 seconds, if possible.



## Tips for using your MDI

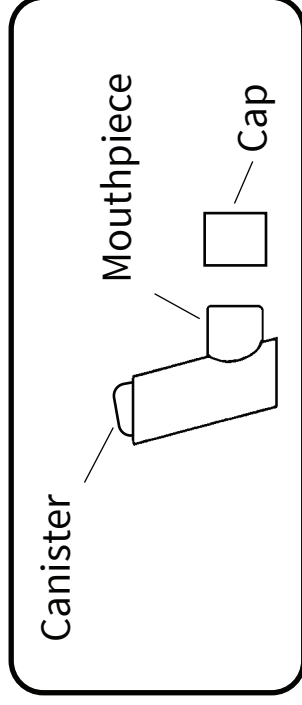
- Know when to use your **maintenance MDI** and when to use your **reliever or rescue MDI**.
- After using your **maintenance MDI**:
  - › Rinse your mouth with water, gargle, and spit. **Do not swallow.**
- **Carry your reliever or rescue MDI with you at all times.**
- In cold weather, carry your MDI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

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.



### Cleaning your spacer device

- Once every 7 days (1 week), put all the parts of your spacer device in a sink (or a large bowl) of warm water with a mild dish soap.
- **Do not:**
  - > put your spacer device in the dishwasher.
  - > run tap water through it.
  - > use a cloth or a brush to clean inside it.
  - > **put the parts back together** until the spacer device is fully dry.
- Rinse your spacer device in a sink of clear water using a gentle motion.
- Let all parts air dry fully.

**Note:** Your spacer device may have a whistle to tell you that you are breathing in too fast. If you are using the device properly, you should NOT hear the whistle.

9. Remove the spacer device from your mouth and 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 4 to 9.

### After using your MDI:

- **Rinse your mouth with water after using any maintenance MDI that contains a corticosteroid.**
- Put the caps back on your MDI and spacer device.
- Store your MDI at room temperature.
- Write down the number of doses you used.

## Method 2: Rebreathing Method

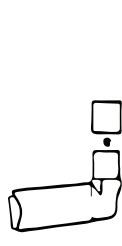
Use this method if:

- › You cannot hold your breath.
- › You cannot take slow, deep breaths in.

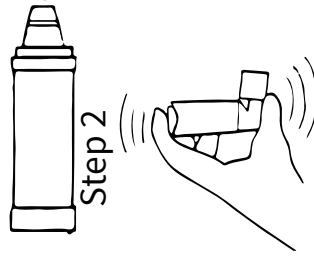
1. Make sure that the metal canister of the MDI is firmly inside the plastic cover.
2. Shake the MDI well.
3. Take the plastic caps off of the MDI and the spacer device.
4. Place the mouthpiece of the MDI into the opening of the spacer device.
5. Put the mouthpiece of the spacer device into your mouth and seal your lips around it.
6. Breathe normally through the spacer device.

7. Press the MDI to spray the medication into the spacer device. Breathe normally through the spacer device for 4 to 5 breaths. **Do not** take the device out of your mouth while breathing.

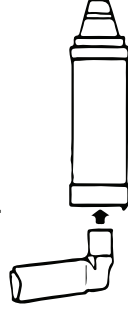
Step 1



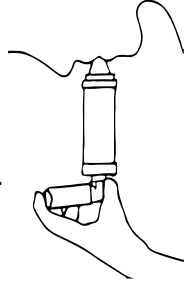
Step 2



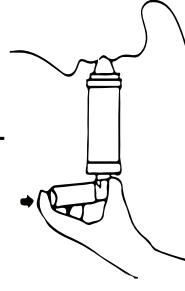
Steps 3 and 4



Steps 5 and 6



Step 7



8. Remove the spacer device from your mouth and breathe out.

### If you need more than one dose:

Take only 1 dose at a time. Wait for 30 seconds between each dose. Then shake the MDI well, and repeat steps 4 to 7.

### After using your MDI:

- Rinse your mouth with water after using any maintenance MDI that contains a corticosteroid.
- Put the caps back on your MDI and spacer device.
- Store your MDI at room temperature.
- Write down the number of doses you used.

### If you need to use both hands to press the MDI:

- Press the MDI, then put the mouthpiece of the spacer device into your mouth and seal your lips around it. Then breathe in using Method 1 or Method 2.

## 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.