

Using a Spacer with Your Inhaler

A spacer is a hollow tube that attaches to your inhaler. The spacer holds the medicine from your inhaler until you are able to breathe it into your lungs. A spacer helps more of the medicine get into your lungs where it is needed. A spacer is also good for people who have trouble pressing the inhaler and taking a breath at the same time.

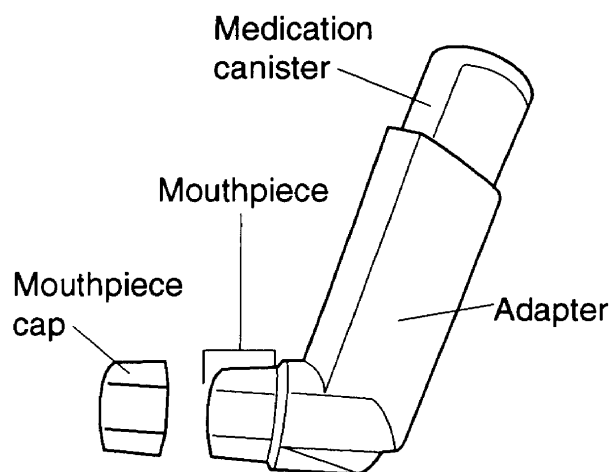
You will need a prescription from your doctor to get a spacer. Most pharmacies will have spacers or be able to get one for you. There are some inhalers that cannot be used with a spacer. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about using a spacer.

Using a spacer

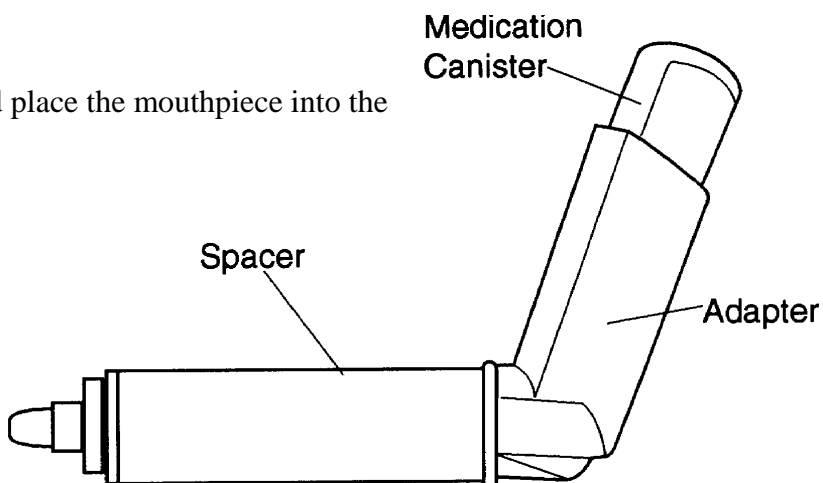
There are different types of spacers. Most have an open end that connects to the inhaler mouthpiece. Another type has the medicine canister from your inhaler fitting into the top of the spacer. Both types are reviewed below.

Steps for use if your inhaler fits into the spacer:

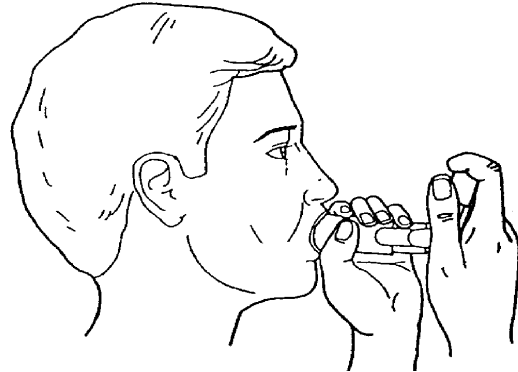
1. Shake your inhaler.
2. Remove the cap from your inhaler and the spacer.



3. Hold the inhaler up and place the mouthpiece into the large end of the spacer.



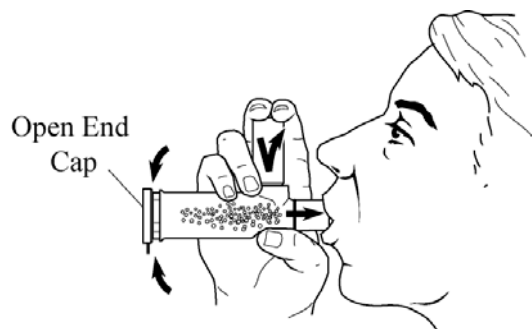
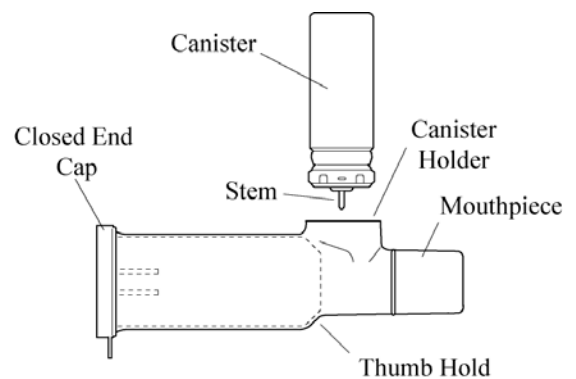
4. Breathe all the way out.
5. Put your lips around the mouthpiece of the spacer.



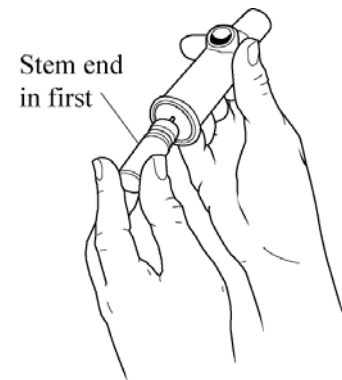
6. Press down on the canister of your inhaler one time and breathe in slowly. **If you hear a whistling sound, you are breathing in too fast and you need to slow down.**
7. Breathe in as deep as you can and hold your breath for 10 seconds. Take the spacer out of your mouth.
8. Breathe out slowly.
9. Wait at least 1 minute and repeat if another puff is ordered.

Steps for use if the canister fits into the top of the spacer:

1. Shake your inhaler well.
2. Remove the canister from its holder.
3. Place the canister stem into the canister holder on top of the spacer.
4. Check that the end cap of the spacer is closed. It is closed when it is pushed in.
5. Breathe all the way out.
6. Put your lips around the mouthpiece of the spacer.
7. Press down on the canister of your inhaler one time and breathe in slowly. **If you hear a whistling sound, you are breathing in too fast and you need to slow down.**



8. Breathe in as deep as you can and hold your breath for 10 seconds. Take the spacer out of your mouth.
9. Breathe out slowly.
10. Wait at least 1 minute and repeat if another puff is ordered. **Be sure to push in the end cap to close it.**
11. Store the canister inside the spacer between uses. Remove the end cap of the spacer and place the canister in, stem end first. Put the end cap back on the spacer.



Cleaning the spacer

Medicine builds up inside the spacer. The spacer must be kept clean to work well. **Clean the spacer when it is cloudy inside or at least one time each week.** If you use the spacer for more than one medicine, you may need to clean it every 2-3 days.

1. Take the spacer apart and soak it in warm soapy water for 10 minutes.
2. Rinse well with clean water.
3. Shake to remove excess water and sit the spacer parts on a paper towel to air dry.
4. Make sure all parts are dry before putting it back together and using it.
5. If the white film does not come off from inside the spacer, you need to replace it with a new one.

When to replace a spacer

Ask your doctor for a new prescription to replace your spacer if:

- The spacer is cracked.
- Any rubber parts harden, curl or crack.
- Any part is broken or missing.
- The film inside the spacer will not come out with cleaning.

If you would like more written information, please call the Library for Health Information at (614)293-3707. You can also make the request by e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.