

FIGURE 3-14. HOW TO USE YOUR METERED-DOSE INHALER

How To Use Your Metered-Dose Inhaler

Using an inhaler seems simple, but most patients do not use it the right way. When you use your inhaler the wrong way, less medicine gets to your lungs.

For the next few days, read these steps aloud as you do them or ask someone to read them to you. Ask your doctor or nurse to check how well you are using your inhaler.

Use your inhaler in one of the three ways pictured below. A or B are best, but C can be used if you have trouble with A and B. Your doctor may give you other types of inhalers.

Steps for Using Your Inhaler

Getting ready

1. Take off the cap and shake the inhaler.
2. Breathe out all the way.
3. Hold your inhaler the way your doctor said (A, B, or C below).

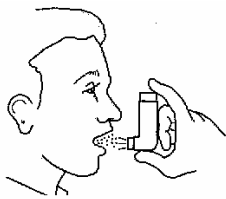
Breathe in slowly

4. As you start breathing in slowly through your mouth, press down on the inhaler one time. (If you use a holding chamber, first press down on the inhaler. Within 5 seconds, begin to breathe in slowly.)

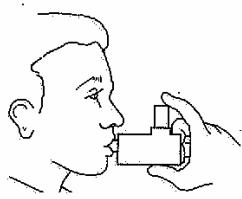
Hold your breath

5. Keep breathing in slowly, as deeply as you can.
6. Hold your breath as you count to 10 slowly, if you can.
7. For inhaled quick-relief medicine (beta₂-agonists), wait about 15–30 seconds between puffs. There is no need to wait between puffs for other medicines.

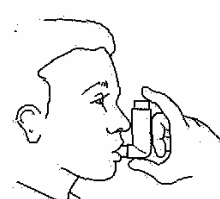
A. Hold inhaler 1 to 2 inches in front of your mouth (about the width of two fingers).



B. Use a spacer/holding chamber. These come in many shapes and can be useful to any patient.



C. Put the inhaler in your mouth. Do not use for steroids.



Clean your inhaler as needed, and know when to replace your inhaler. For instructions, read the package insert or talk to your doctor, other health care provider, or pharmacist.