



Aerosol inhaler

Information for patients from Medicines Information

Your doctor has prescribed you an aerosol inhaler. This leaflet:

- explains how to use and care for your inhaler; and
- provides practical tips to make sure you get the best out of your inhaler.

Please use these instructions alongside the advice from your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.

What is an aerosol inhaler?

An aerosol inhaler is a medical device used to deliver medication directly into the lungs, in the form of a fine mist or spray.

What is an aerosol inhaler used for?

An aerosol inhaler is commonly used to treat respiratory conditions like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). An inhaler helps to quickly open airways and reduce symptoms, such as shortness of breath or wheezing.

How do I use my aerosol inhaler?

Before you use your inhaler

- Make sure you have your inhaler and any instructions that came with it.
- Different inhalers may need specific instructions, so follow those carefully.

Using your aerosol inhaler

- Take off the inhaler cap. Put this to one side, and put it back on after you have used your inhaler. Some inhalers have a dust cap as well, which protects the mouthpiece. Take this off and keep it with the inhaler cap.
- Make sure there is nothing in the inhaler mouthpiece that should not be there.

- Shake the inhaler well before using it, to make sure the medication is properly mixed.
- Breathe out gently, to empty your lungs as much as possible.
- Sit or stand up straight and slightly tilt your chin up.
- Hold the inhaler upright, with the mouthpiece at the bottom. Place your fingers around the canister and your thumb at the bottom of the inhaler.
- Place the mouthpiece between your teeth and close your lips tightly around it to ensure a good seal.
- Start inhaling slowly and deeply through your mouth. Press down on the canister to release the medication at the same time. **Inhaling and releasing the medicine at the same time is important for proper delivery.**
- Hold your breath for 10 seconds (or as long as you find comfortable). This will allow the medication to reach deep into your lungs.
- **If you are prescribed a second puff**, wait 30 seconds to a minute. Shake the inhaler again, and repeat the steps above.
- When you have finished using the inhaler, replace the cap.
- If your inhaler has a dose counter, check this to make sure it is not empty.

Important tips

Disposal

- Once your inhaler is empty, return it to a local pharmacy for safe disposal.

Steroid inhalers

- If prescribed a steroid inhaler, after each use rinse your mouth with water and spit it out. This will reduce your risk of developing oral thrush. The signs of oral thrush include:
 - creamy white patches on the tongue, inner cheeks, or roof of the mouth
 - redness, soreness, and a burning sensation in these areas
 - difficulty swallowing, loss of taste, and cracking at the corners of the mouth.
- If regularly taking a high dose steroid inhaler, you must carry a Steroid Card. In an emergency, this card will tell healthcare staff that you use this inhaler. Please ask your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse for more information.

How do I clean my inhaler?

Clean your inhaler once a week.

1. **Remove the medication canister and cap.** Do not wash the canister or immerse it in water.
2. **Clean the mouthpiece**

- Run warm tap water through the top and bottom of the plastic mouthpiece for 30 to 60 seconds. Do not use cleaning products, such as washing-up liquid, to clean your inhaler.
- Use a soft cloth to remove any medication crusting around the pinhole in the mouthpiece.

3. Dry the mouthpiece

- Shake off any water. Allow the mouthpiece to dry completely, preferably overnight.
- If you need to use the inhaler before the mouthpiece is dry, shake off excess water, replace the canister, and test spray twice (away from your face).

How do I store my inhaler?

- Store your inhaler at room temperature, away from moisture and heat.
- Do not leave the inhaler in areas where strong sun can heat up the canister.

Additional information

- Always follow your doctor's advice.
- Speak to your doctor or pharmacist if you have further questions.
- Read the patient information leaflet that came with your inhaler.

By following these steps and tips, you can make sure that you use your inhaler effectively, and receive the correct amount of medication to manage your condition.

For more information on using your aerosol inhaler, please watch the following YouTube video **Metered Dose Aerosol Inhaler counselling**. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioLYqqb2-ek>)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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