

Using a spacer with mouthpiece



What is a spacer?

A spacer is used along with your child's MDI (metered dose inhaler) to help your child absorb the medication into the lungs. The instructions in this fact sheet are for the AeroChamber Max™ VHC, which is the spacer we use at CHEO. Other spacers are available and the instructions for use are similar.

Why does my child need a spacer?

A spacer gets the medication into the lungs better. A spacer is always needed if your child takes steroid medications.

When can my child begin using a spacer with mouthpiece?

- Children can begin using one when they are able to keep their lips tightly around the mouthpiece
- Most children can use a spacer with mouthpiece around 5 years of age.

How do we use the spacer?

1. Prepare the MDI:

- Remove the cap
- Shake the cannister well
- Place it upright in the rubber opening at the back of the spacer

2. Place the mouthpiece of the spacer into your child's mouth and have her close her lips tightly around the mouthpiece.

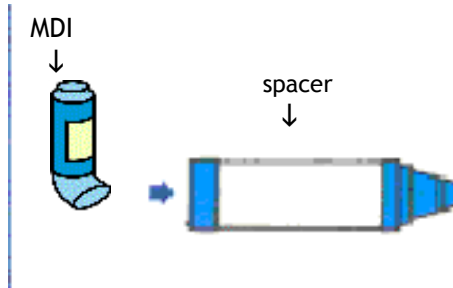
3. Press down on the cannister, to release **one puff** of medication into the spacer.

4. Ask your child to take one slow breath in through the mouth as deeply as possible, holding it for 10-15 seconds. The blue inspiratory valve on the mouthpiece adapter should move towards your child. If you are using an *AeroChamber Max™ VHC*, you will hear a musical sound if your child breathes too quickly. If this happens, have your child breathe more slowly.

If your child cannot hold one breath for 10-15 seconds, have him take 3-4 slow breaths instead.

5. If your doctor told you to give more than one puff of medication, wait 30 seconds, then repeat steps 1-4.

6. **Take the MDI out of the spacer.** Put the mouthpiece cover back on the MDI to keep dust and lint out.



If you're giving inhaled steroid medication:

Reduce the risk of thrush (yeast infection) in the mouth by:

- Having your child rinse her mouth with water after the medication.



Keeping the spacer and MDI clean

Keep your child's spacer in a plastic container so it stays clean and dust free.



Clean the spacer once a week:

1. Remove the back rubber piece of the spacer and the mouthpiece adapter. If your child uses a ACTTM Girl or ACTTM Boy Aerochamber, you will only be able to remove the back rubber piece. The mouthpiece adapter does not come off.
2. Soak all parts in warm water and dishsoap for 10-15 minutes
3. Rinse well with clear water
4. Allow to air dry
5. Make sure everything is completely dry before putting it away or using it.

Clean the MDI once a week with a dry tissue or cloth:

1. Remove the mouthpiece cover (do not remove the canister from the plastic casing).
2. Wipe inside and outside the mouthpiece with a dry tissue or cloth.
3. **Don't use water to clean the MDI.** Don't put any part of the MDI in water.
4. Put the mouthpiece cover back on to keep dust and lint out of the MDI.

When will my child need a new spacer with mouthpiece?

Your child will need a new spacer with mouthpiece if any parts become cracked or loose.

See a doctor right away if:

Your child's asthma is not well controlled or is getting worse.



Numbers to know

Telehealth Ontario
1-866-797-0000
Health Information from Registered Nurses,
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
TTY: 1-866-797-0007



Want more info?

www.cheo.on.ca

Follow the link to Programs and Health Info, then Asthma in the A-Z listing

