

CORRECT USE OF METERED DOSE INHALERS

Use of metered dose inhaler (MDI), is an easy and convenient way for someone with lung disease to take his/her own medications. By inhaling the medicine directly into your lungs, you decrease the side effects on the rest of your body. Anything inhaled into your lungs will "go to work" quicker, than if it is taken in pill form.

There are several important points to learn in order to use your inhaler correctly:

- The use of an Aerochamber attached to a MDI is the best way to use your inhaled medication. An Aerochamber holds the medication in the chamber for approximately 10-15 seconds; long enough for you to inhale it in a slow, deep breath.
- The Aerochamber increases the amount of medication that goes directly to your lungs. Even with correct technique and inhalation, you **CANNOT** get as much medication into your lungs without the Aerochamber. So, please use your Aerochamber!
- An Aerochamber comes in many forms, but their goal is the same-to allow you to get your medicine into your lungs where it can help your breathing! Ask your pharmacist or physician for help in obtaining your Aerochamber and make sure you are given instructions on proper use of your device! (or pulmonary rehab respiratory therapist!)
- When using Aerochamber with your MDI, you will probably not taste or feel the medicine going into your throat and lungs. That is a good thing-anything you taste will stay on your tongue to be exhaled out into the air or swallowed - not inhaled into your lungs! This is especially helpful with steroid inhalers because the Aerochamber will help prevent yeast infections in your mouth.

How to use your Aerochamber:

1. Attach the inhaler to the Aerochamber.
2. Shake well. Exhale.
3. Press down on the MDI. This will put one puff into the holding chamber.
4. Inhale slowly and deeply.
5. Hold your breath for 5-10 seconds. (The longer the better)
6. Exhale peacefully.
7. Wait a full minute before your next puff. repeat steps 2-6.

How to know how much medicine is left in your inhaler:

- The best way for you to know how much medicine is in your inhaler is to **COUNT** your puffs! This is not as difficult or time consuming as you may think!
- If you are using your inhaler on a regular schedule, it is easy to keep track of your puffs. Each canister states how many actuations (puffs) there are in that particular inhaler. Example: Combivent has 200 actuations. Joan Smith takes 2 puffs 4 times a day. (8 total puffs). Divide 200 by 8 and you get 25-that means Joan's Combivent will last 25 days.

- If you have an Albuterol inhaler as needed-just put a piece of tape around it and mark it every time you use a puff. This is the best way to ensure that when you need that rescue drug, you are getting medicine, not propellant!
- The method of checking your inhaler in a bowl of water is inaccurate-unless the canister is full, it is all guesswork. Remember, the propellant and drug are both in your MDI-they both have a weight-they is one reason why this method is inaccurate.

Cleaning your aerochamber:

Each day you should remove the mouthpiece from your aerochamber and rinse it in warm running water. If your mouthpiece is attached, run it under water with the whole aerochamber. Once a week, wash your aerochamber in warm water with dishwashing liquid in it. Rinse well and air dry. Every 2 weeks, soak the aerochamber in a solution of 3 parts water and 1 part vinegar, Follow this with a good rinsing and let air-dry.

Use if inhaled medications can help you control the symptoms of lung disease. But, if they aren't used correctly, with the proper delivery device, you decrease that control by decreasing the amount of medicine you get to your lungs!