

Inhaled Medication With A Metered Dose Inhaler

Many medications are available as inhaled treatments. Inhaled methods deliver medication directly to the airway, which is helpful for lung diseases. The patient and health care provider can choose from a variety of delivery systems for inhaling medication.

The metered dose inhaler (MDI) consists of a pressurized canister of medication in a plastic case with a mouthpiece. Pressing the MDI releases a mist of medication. When inhaled correctly, the medication has a better chance to reach the small airways. This increases the medication's effectiveness. Its portable size, efficiency and convenience make the MDI a desirable method for inhalation treatment.

The following steps outline the best method to take an MDI without using a spacer attachment.

1. Remove the cap from the inhaler.
2. Hold the inhaler with the mouthpiece at the bottom.
3. Shake the inhaler. This mixes the medication properly.
4. Check the box with the technique your health care provider recommends and follow the step:
 - Use a spacer/holding chamber – Place the MDI in the spacer holding chamber. Seal your lips around the spacer/holding chamber mouthpiece.
 - Use open mouth technique - Hold the mouthpiece 1½ - 2 inches (2 - 3 finger widths) in front of your mouth.
 - Use closed mouth technique – Place the mouthpiece in your mouth with your lips sealed tightly around the mouthpiece.
5. Tilt your head back slightly and open your mouth wide.
6. Gently breathe out.
7. Press the inhaler and at the same time begin a slow, deep breath.
8. Continue to breathe in slowly and deeply over 3 - 5 seconds. Breathing slowly delivers the medication deeply into the airways.
9. Hold your breath for up to ten seconds. This allows the medication time to deposit in the airways.
10. Resume normal breathing.

Repeat steps 3 - 10 when more than one puff is prescribed.

Check the package insert for cleaning instructions and other specific instructions for the metered dose inhaler you are using.

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