

# HOW TO USE YOUR SPACER DEVICE



PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT



## WHY USE A SPACER DEVICE?

Using a spacer device (either a spacer or holding chamber) with your Metered Dose Inhaler can help reduce the amount of medicine that sticks to the back of your throat. This can help you avoid hoarseness and a yeast infection in your throat called “thrush.” For this reason, spacers are sometimes recommended for use with inhaled corticosteroids. A Valved Holding Chamber can help if you have trouble inhaling and pressing down your inhaler at the same time. Valved Holding Chambers prevent your exhaled breath from entering the chamber. Children, or anyone who has difficulty using an Metered Dose Inhaler, can use a facemask with a Valved Holding Chamber. To get the best results from your spacer device, have your health care provider demonstrate how to use it correctly.

## STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING A SPACER DEVICE:

1. Remove the cap from your Metered Dose Inhaler. Check the mouthpiece for dust, lint, or objects. Check your spacer device for foreign objects as well.
2. Shake your Metered Dose Inhaler several times.
3. Insert your inhaler into your spacer or Valved Holding Chamber.
4. Breathe out normally.
5. Place the mouthpiece of the device in your mouth and form a tight seal around it with your lips. (Or if you're using a mask, place the mask on the face, covering the mouth and nose with a good seal).
6. Press down on the Metered Dose Inhaler only once so that the medicine from the Metered Dose Inhaler goes into the spacer device. (Do not spray more than one puff of medication into the spacer at a time).
7. Take a slow, deep breath. Some devices will make a whistling sound if you breathe in too quickly. If you hear the whistle, keep breathing but slow down. If you're using a facemask, breathe in and out three to six times.
8. Remove the mouthpiece of the device from your mouth. Try to hold your breath, if you can, for ten seconds.
9. If you need a second dose (puff), wait about one minute, then repeat. Some inhalers require less time between puffs, some require more. Ask your healthcare professional if you aren't sure.
10. If you use a corticosteroid (like Aerobid®, Flovent® HFA, etc.), rinse your mouth with water after you are completely finished. If a facemask is used, wash the area around the mouth to remove any medication and prevent irritation to the skin.

## HOW SHOULD I CARE FOR MY SPACER DEVICE?

Clean your spacer device according to the instructions from the manufacturer. Make sure the device is dry before you use it for the next dose.

If you're using a spacer device that's not made of an anti-static plastic or metal, you'll need to soak it for about 20 minutes each month in warm water with a couple drops of dishwashing detergent. This is to prevent static build-up on the plastic that can reduce the amount of medicine you get from your inhaler. In addition, do not store your spacer device in a plastic bag. Static charge is added each time the device is placed in the bag or removed from the bag.

