

# FACTSHEET

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## Giving your child asthma medications

The most common way for your child to take their asthma medication is by breathing it directly into their lungs through their mouth or mouth and nose. During an asthma attack, the best way for your child to take their medication is with a puffer and spacer device. For other times e.g. before exercise and play, or in the daily management of asthma, and depending on your child's age and ability, other devices may be an appropriate alternative. Speak with your child's doctor or asthma educator to determine the most suitable device. Step by step instructions for using alternative devices for children seven years and above can be found on [page 14](#).

### Spacer Devices

A spacer device is a plastic holding chamber that helps children with asthma to use their aerosol inhalers or metered dose inhalers (puffers) effectively. It is highly recommended that spacers be used by all children who require a puffer as this will allow more medication to be delivered directly to the airways.

Using a spacer to deliver your child's asthma medication has many advantages:

**Easy to use**

**Easy to clean**

**Inexpensive**

**Portable**

Spacers come in two sizes – small volume (e.g. Breath a Tech, Aero Chamber, Space Chamber, Able Spacer) and large volume (e.g. Volumatic). Check with your local pharmacy or hospital which spacers are available.

**Nebulisers are not commonly used for children in the home setting as spacers have been found to be as effective.**

### Cleaning Spacers and Puffer Canisters

#### Spacers

- Take the spacer apart if possible.
- Wash in warm soapy water (dishwashing liquid).
- Do not rinse.
- Allow the parts to air dry. Rinsing and drying with a cloth may cause static electricity to build up resulting in the medication clinging to the inside of spacer.
- When dry put spacer back together ready for use.

#### Puffers

- Remove the canister from the plastic holder.
- Do not wash the canister.
- Rinse the plastic holder under warm running water.
- Shake out excess water and dry.
- Place the canister back in the holder.
- Keep the cap in place when not using puffer.

- Clean your spacer and puffer canister regularly and whenever the puffer does not spray well.
- Change and wash Intal and Intal Forte plastic holders daily to prevent blockage (an extra holder is supplied).
- Do not wash Seretide and Qvar plastic holders – just wipe the mouthpiece of the plastic holder with a cloth.
- Store puffer below 20 degrees Celsius and regularly check the expiry date, which can be found on the side of the canister.