

# TOP 10 INHALER MISTAKES

Inhaled asthma medicine needs to reach the airways to work. Here are 10 common mistakes made when using a metered-dose inhaler (MDI) and how to correct them.

## 1 Slouching

**FIX IT:** Sitting up straight or standing allows the lungs to fully inhale and provides more power to exhale.



## 2 Using an empty inhaler

**FIX IT:** Request a refill when the inhaler has 30 puffs or doses left.



## 3 Not shaking or priming the inhaler \*

**FIX IT:** Shake the inhaler canister vigorously (about 10 to 15 times) for the medication to be ready to work. When using a new inhaler, prime it by releasing three to four test sprays. Prime again if not used for several weeks. \*This tip applies to MDI inhalers. Diskus or dry powder inhalers do not require shaking.



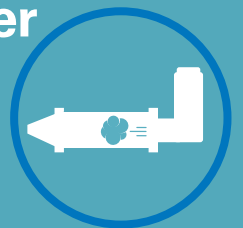
## 4 Using an MDI inhaler without a spacer

**FIX IT:** A spacer helps more of the medicine get to the airways. Insert the inhaler into the spacer. Spray one puff of medicine and inhale slowly. Hold your breath for a count of 10 and exhale slowly.



## 5 Spraying several puffs of inhaler into spacer

**FIX IT:** Spray only one puff at a time of the inhaler into the spacer for each breath. Breathe out before inhaling. Inhale and hold your breath for a count of 10, then exhale. Repeat for the number of puffs the doctor prescribed.



## 6 Holding the head too far forward or backward

**FIX IT:** The head needs to be in a normal position, not too far back or too far forward, to help make a direct path for the medicine to reach the airways.



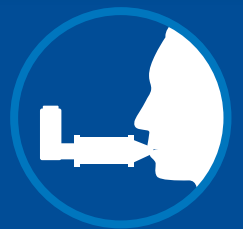
## 7 Tongue or teeth in the way of spacer/inhaler opening

**FIX IT:** Put the mouthpiece of the spacer/inhaler in the mouth above the tongue, under the top teeth.



## 8 Mouth not tight enough around spacer/inhaler

**FIX IT:** Close the lips around the mouthpiece of the spacer or inhaler so air does not escape.



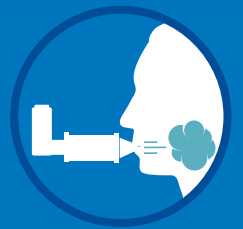
## 9 Directing spacer/inhaler at tongue or roof of mouth

**FIX IT:** Aim the spacer/inhaler at the back of the throat, so the medicine reaches the lungs.



## 10 Inhaling medicine too fast

**FIX IT:** Inhale slowly. A whistle sound made when using a spacer means the inhalation is too fast.



These tips are not applicable to breath-activated and powder inhalers.



### Reminders

- Follow instructions for using your inhaler.
- Gargle and spit after inhaling a steroid.
- Show your inhaler technique to your provider.
- Clean the inhaler and spacer according to instructions.

### Asthma Facts

- 1 in 11 adults has asthma
- One-third of adults with asthma miss work
- Most prevalent among ages 18-24
- 10 asthma deaths occur each day