

How to Use a Spacer with Metered Dose Inhalers (MDIs)

Background

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, inhaled bronchodilators (e.g. salbutamol) should be administered to asthmatics and COPD patients via a **metered dose inhaler** and **spacer device***, rather than a nebuliser in the first instance. This change is advised by the CUH Respiratory Team.

***NOTE:** Spacer devices are stock items on many wards. They may also be ordered from the Pharmacy Department.

Administration of Metered Dose Inhaler (MDI) via Spacer Device

1. Assemble the spacer if it comes in two halves
2. **Shake the inhaler**
3. Insert the inhaler into the spacer
4. Grip the mouthpiece with your teeth and place your lips around it
5. Press the inhaler once and **breath in and out slowly five times** (tidal breathing)
6. **Repeat** steps 2-6 for **each prescribed dose** of medication
7. There should be minimal delay between MDI actuation and inhalation.



Image 1: Assembled spacer with metered dose inhaler

Remember

- **Only release one puff of medication into a spacer at a time**
- Multiple actuations into the spacer before inhalation may markedly reduce the amount of drug inhaled
- The inhaler should be **shaken in between puffs**.

References

1. <https://www.asthma.ie>
2. <https://ginasthma.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/GINA-2019-main-report-June-2019-wms.pdf>
3. <https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/quality-improvement/guidelines/asthma/>