



MDwise

A McLaren Company

Breathing Problems: Using a Dry Powder Inhaler

What is a dry powder inhaler?

A dry powder inhaler delivers medicine in the form of a fine powder. It lets you breathe medicine into your lungs quickly.

Dry powder inhalers are breath-activated. This means that when you breathe in through the device, the device releases the medicine into your lungs.

Dry powder inhalers come in different shapes and sizes. For some, you need to add the medicine to the inhaler each time you use it. Other dry powder inhalers come with a supply of medicine already in them. But for these, you will need to "load" each dose of medicine each time you use it. How you load a dose depends on the type of inhaler you have.

Why should you use an inhaler?

Your inhaler can help you in an emergency. It is the most effective way to get medicine into your lungs. It also helps with long-term treatment.

- It can be used with different types of medicine for breathing problems.
- It can help keep symptoms under control and may help reduce long-term damage to your lungs.
- When used right, an inhaler puts medicine right into your lungs. The medicine does not travel through your body. This can help lower or prevent any side effects from the medicine.



- You may be able to use less medicine than is found in a pill but get the same effect.
- Inhaling the medicine can work faster than a pill.

How do you use it?

To get started using your dry powder inhaler:

- Talk with your doctor to be sure you are using it the right way. It might help if you practice using it in front of a mirror. Use the inhaler exactly as prescribed.
- Keep your inhaler in a cool, dry place. Do not store it in the bathroom. Moisture in the air can cause the dry powder to clump together and clog the inhaler.
- Check how much medicine is in the inhaler. Some dry powder inhalers have dose counters that show how many

doses are left in the inhaler. If your inhaler does not have a dose counter, your doctor or pharmacist can teach you how to keep track of how much medicine is left.

Follow these steps for using a dry powder inhaler:

1. Check that you have the correct medicine. If you use several inhalers, put a label on each one so that you know which one to use at the right time.
2. Remove the inhaler cap, if there is one.
3. Add or load a dose of medicine as directed by your health care provider.
4. Tilt your head back slightly, and breathe out slowly and completely. Hold the inhaler away from your mouth when you breathe out. Do not breathe out into the inhaler. This can blow some of the powder out of the inhaler. Also, the moisture in your breath can cause the dry powder to clump together and clog the inhaler.

5. Place the inhaler in your mouth, and close your lips tightly around the mouthpiece.
6. Inhale quickly and deeply through your mouth for 2 or 3 seconds. This pulls the powder from the inhaler into your lungs. After you have inhaled the powder, take the inhaler out of your mouth.
7. Hold your breath for 10 seconds. This will let the medicine settle in your lungs. Then slowly breathe out through pursed lips. Make sure not to breathe out into the inhaler.
8. Repeat steps 1 through 7 if you need to take a second dose.

When using a steroid medicine, rinse your mouth out with water after you finish. Do not swallow the water. Swallowing the water will increase the chance that the medicine will get into your bloodstream. This may increase the side effects of the medicine.

Some powder may build up on the inhaler, but it is not necessary to clean the inhaler every day. Follow your doctor's or pharmacist's instructions for cleaning it.