

HealthyActions

Achieving Your Goals for Healthy Living



Asthma Inhalers

Inhale: Breathe in
Exhale: Breathe out



Asthma inhalers are small handheld machines used to send medicine into your lungs. There are different kinds of inhalers for different kinds of medicine. Don't be afraid to use your inhaler.

To learn which inhaler is best for you, talk with your doctor. Your doctor will help you learn how to use the device the right way.

Asthma: A lung disease in which your airway tightens up and makes it hard to breathe. Asthma causes wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and cough.

Asthma can be set off by colds, hay fever, exercise, weather changes and other triggers like dust, smoke, or pet hair.

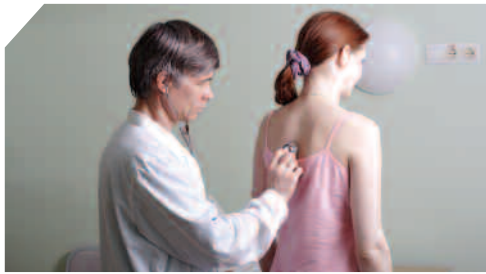
Asthma Attack or Episode: When someone is having an asthma attack, muscles around the airways tighten. The airways become narrow and swollen. They also make too much mucus. It is hard for air to pass in and out of the lungs.

A **spacer** or **holding chamber** is a short tube or chamber that connects to the inhaler. It holds the medicine until you are ready to breathe in.

Here are some key facts about types of inhalers.

Important Inhaler Information

Some inhalers have a gas called chlorofluorocarbons, also known as CFC. CFC inhalers will be changing to HFA inhaler devices (hydrofluoroalkanes) because CFCs harm the environment. When you change to an HFA inhaler, you may notice a different taste and smell and the mist will be less forceful. The medicine in your inhaler is not changing.



Asthma Inhalers

Talk to your doctor if you have asthma symptoms every day or are using your rescue inhaler every day. Your asthma may not be in control.



Inhaler Medications

Asthma inhalers are used to deliver your asthma medicine. There are many types of medicine. Some are used for quick relief (rescue inhalers). Some are used for long-term relief (maintenance inhalers) that will help prevent symptoms later on.

- **Rescue Inhalers** provide quick relief of a sudden *asthma attack* when needed. They relax the muscles around your *airways* so you can breathe better.
- **Maintenance Inhalers** provide longer relief of asthma symptoms. When used every day they help you avoid asthma episodes. They help the swelling in your lungs and airways. They do not replace your rescue inhalers for relief of sudden asthma symptoms.

Airways: Parts of the body that move air into your lungs and out of your body.

References

National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. Diseases and Conditions Index. Asthma. Available at: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/Asthma/Asthma_Treatments.html
American Lung Association. Available at: www.lungusa.org

