### Inhaler technique

**Use these checklists to teach, check and/or confirm the way your patients use their inhalers. Assess patients’ inhaler technique at every opportunity.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General tips for inhalers</th>
<th>Pressurised metered-dose inhaler (pMDI)</th>
<th>pMDI &amp; spacer</th>
<th>Accuhaler</th>
<th>Autohaler</th>
<th>Breezhaler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¢ Turbuhalers, Respimat and pMDI devices should be primed before they are used for the first time.</td>
<td>1. Remove inhaler cap</td>
<td>1. Prepare the spacer*</td>
<td>1. Open cover using thumb grip</td>
<td>1. Remove cap</td>
<td>1. Remove cap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For inhalers with a dose counter, it is important to check there are sufficient doses remaining in the inhaler before each use.</td>
<td>2. Hold inhaler upright and shake well</td>
<td>2. Hold inhaler cap</td>
<td>2. Hold inhaler upright and shake well</td>
<td>2. Hold inhaler upright and shake well</td>
<td>2. Flip mouthpiece to open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the Respimat inhaler, ensure the cartridge has been loaded into the device before using the inhaler for the first time.</td>
<td>3. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler</td>
<td>3. Hold inhaler upright and shake well before inserting into spacer</td>
<td>3. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler</td>
<td>3. Push lever up</td>
<td>3. Remove capsule from blister and place in chamber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All pMDIs should be shaken before each dose. Do not shake dry powder inhalers (DPIs).</td>
<td>4. Put mouthpiece between teeth without biting and close lips to form a good seal</td>
<td>4. Put mouthpiece between teeth without biting and close lips to form a good seal</td>
<td>4. Place mouthpiece in mouth and close lips to form a good seal, keep inhaler horizontal</td>
<td>4. Push lever up</td>
<td>4. Close mouthpiece until it clicks</td>
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<tr>
<td>For all types of inhalers, it is important to keep the chin tilted up so the medicine reaches the lungs effectively.</td>
<td>5. Breathe in slowly through the mouth and, at the same time, press down firmly on canister</td>
<td>5. Breathe out gently, into the spacer</td>
<td>5. Breathe in steadily and deeply</td>
<td>5. Push lever up</td>
<td>5. Press side buttons in once and release (do not shake)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After use, wipe down the mouthpiece of the inhaler with a dry cloth.</td>
<td>6. Keep breathing in slowly and deeply and hold breath for about 5 seconds or as long as comfortable</td>
<td>6. Hold spacer level and press down firmly on inhaler canister</td>
<td>6. Hold breath for about 5 seconds or as long as comfortable</td>
<td>6. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler</td>
<td>6. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For inhalers containing corticosteroids, it is important to rinse the mouth out with water after using the inhaler to remove any residual medicine. This will reduce the likelihood of voice changes and oral thrush.</td>
<td>7. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth</td>
<td>7. Single breath: Breathe in slowly and deeply and hold breath for around 5 seconds or as long as comfortable. Take spacer out of mouth while holding breath OR Tidal breath:** Breathe in and out normally for 3 or 4 breaths before removing spacer from the mouth</td>
<td>7. Tidal breath:** Breathe in quickly and steadily, so capsule vibrates</td>
<td>7. Hold breath for about 5 seconds, or as long as comfortable</td>
<td>7. Hold breath for about 5 seconds, or as long as comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*New plastic spacers should be prewashed in warm water and dishwashing detergent (without rinsing), and air-dried before first use.</td>
<td>8. Breathe out gently</td>
<td>8. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth</td>
<td>8. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth</td>
<td>8. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth</td>
<td>8. Hold breath for about 5 seconds, or as long as comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Tidal breathing recommended for young children and during acute flare ups.</td>
<td>9. Remove inhaler from spacer</td>
<td>9. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler</td>
<td>9. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler</td>
<td>9. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler</td>
<td>9. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Not usually appropriate for medicines delivered by this device.</td>
<td>10. If an extra dose is needed, repeat steps 2 to 8</td>
<td>Close mouthpiece until it clicks</td>
<td>10. Push lever down</td>
<td>10. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth</td>
<td>10. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Replace cap on inhaler</td>
<td>11. If an extra dose is needed, repeat steps 2 to 10</td>
<td>11. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler</td>
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<td>11. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Genuair

1. Slide the cover down until you hear a click (do not shake)
2. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler
3. Place mouthpiece in mouth and close lips to form a good seal. Do not cover air vent
4. Breathe in steadily and deeply
5. Hold breath for about 5 seconds or as long as comfortable
6. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth
7. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler
8. Slide the cover upwards as far as it will go, to cover the mouthpiece

## Handihaler

1. Remove cap by squeezing arrows and pulling
2. Hold inhaler so large coloured button is facing straight up
3. Without tilting inhaler, press and release the button
4. Check control window has changed to green
5. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler
6. Place mouthpiece in mouth and close lips to form a good seal. Keep inhaler horizontal
7. Breathe in strongly and deeply. Keep breathing in as long as comfortable
8. Hold breath for 5 seconds or as long as comfortable
9. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth.
10. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler.
11. Check control window has changed to red.
12. Replace cap

## Respimat

1. Hold inhaler upright with the cap closed
2. Turn base in direction of arrows until it clicks (half a turn)
3. Open the cap until it snaps fully open
4. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler
5. Place mouthpiece in mouth and close lips to form a good seal. Do not cover air vents
6. Breathe in slowly and deeply through mouth and, at the same time, press down on the dose button
7. Keep breathing in slowly and deeply
8. Hold breath for about 5 seconds or as long as comfortable
9. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth.
10. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler.
11. Close mouthpiece cover
12. If an extra dose is needed, repeat steps 1 to 9

## Spiromax

1. Hold inhaler upright with mouthpiece cover at the bottom
2. Open the mouthpiece cover downwards until it clicks
3. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler
4. Place mouthpiece between teeth without biting and close lips to form a good seal. Do not cover air vents
5. Breathe in strongly and deeply
6. While holding breath, remove inhaler from mouth
7. Hold breath for 5 seconds or as long as comfortable
8. Breathe out gently, away from inhaler
9. Close mouthpiece cover
10. If an extra dose is needed, repeat steps 2 to 9
11. Replace cover

## Turbuhaler

1. Unscrew and remove cover
2. Keep inhaler upright while twisting grip
3. Twist around and then back until click is heard
4. Breathe out gently, away from the inhaler
5. Place mouthpiece between teeth without biting and close lips to form a good seal. Do not cover air vents
6. Breathe in strongly and deeply
7. Hold breath for about 5 seconds or as long as comfortable
8. Remove inhaler from mouth
9. Breathe out gently away from the inhaler
10. If an extra dose is needed, repeat steps 2 to 9
11. Replace cover

## Other devices are available for inhaled medicines – please see the manufacturer’s Product Information for instructions

These checklists are based on the National Asthma Council Australia’s Information paper for health professionals: Inhaler technique for people with asthma or COPD. To view the full document visit: www.nationalasthma.org.au

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