

## How to use an asthma inhaler in infants, toddlers, and preschoolers

These guidelines will help you give asthma medication to your baby, toddler, or preschooler using an inhaler with a spacer plus mask.

### First steps

- Be sure that the spacer plus mask is the correct size for your child. It should cover both the nose and mouth and make a good seal against the skin with gentle pressure.
- Allow your child to handle the spacer and practice placing it on her face. You can show your child how to do this by placing the inhaler on your own face.



### Giving medication

1. Gather together everything you will need (inhaler, spacer, items to entertain or distract your child) before picking up your baby or calling a small child. For toddlers and preschoolers, choose a transition time between activities, rather than interrupting an activity to give medication.
2. Shake the inhaler vigorously three or four times.
3. Insert the inhaler into the spacer opening on the opposite end from the mask.
4. Cradle your infant in your arms or hold your toddler or preschooler on your lap with the child's back against your chest. If your child must stand, support his neck with your hand to avoid uncomfortable stretching of the neck.
5. Holding the inhaler and the end of the spacer in your dominant hand, place the spacer mask on your child's face, covering the nose and mouth and making a good seal. If necessary, hold the mask against the child's face with your other hand.
6. Activate the inhaler with your dominant hand. Encourage your baby to hold on to the spacer chamber. Toddlers and preschoolers may begin to help activate the inhaler.
7. Holding the spacer and mask in place on your child's face, watch the spacer valves while the child takes at least six breaths (about 15 seconds). You should be able to see the valves open and close. As an alternative, a preschooler may take a single large breath and hold it for 10 seconds. Children who can hold a breath for this length of time probably will be able to use a spacer with mouthpiece successfully.
8. Remove the spacer from your child's face and rest for one minute.
9. Repeat the process for the desired number of puffs of medicine, usually two puffs.
10. At least once a week, clean the spacer with soapy water, rinse, and air dry. Read the spacer package insert for cleaning information. Some manufacturers permit washing the spacer in the dishwasher.