

Patient information from BMJ

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Asthma in children: types of inhalers

Most asthma treatments for children are given using inhalers. There are different types of inhalers, and they deliver the medicine in different ways.

One of the most common types, called a **metered-dose inhaler**, involves pressing down on a metal container to release a puff of medicine, which your child breathes in through a mouthpiece.

Many children use a device called a **spacer** along with these inhalers. It is a large plastic container that attaches to the inhaler. The container has a one-way valve, so when a child presses the canister, a puff of drug is released and stored in the empty space in the container.

This allows the child to breathe in the medicine through a mouthpiece in their own time, without having to coordinate their breath with pushing on the top of the inhaler.

Another common type of inhaler is the **dry powder inhaler**. For these inhalers, your child doesn't have to coordinate their breath with pushing on the top of the inhaler. This is because the medicine is released when your child takes a deep, fast breath.

With all types of inhalers, it's important that children hold their breath for a count of 10 after inhaling a dose of medicine. Your doctor or a nurse will make sure you and your child learn how to use your child's inhaler properly.

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