

# How to use a Metered-Dose Inhaler With a Spacer



**1** Shake the inhaler and remove the inhaler cap. Check the inhaler instructions to see if you need to prime your inhaler before you use it. If it needs priming, follow the instructions on how to prime your inhaler.



**2** Place the mouthpiece of the inhaler into the spacer.



**3** Remove the cap from the spacer.



**4** Hold the inhaler upright with the mouthpiece at the bottom.



**5** Tilt your head back slightly and breathe out slowly and completely.



**6** Place the spacer's mouthpiece in your mouth.



**7** Press down on the inhaler to spray one puff of medicine into the spacer and then start breathing in slowly (press first, then breathe in).



**8** Hold your breath for 10 seconds, to give the medicine time to settle in your lungs. If you need to take a second dose, wait 30 to 60 seconds to allow the inhaler valve to refill.

To get started using your metered-dose inhaler (MDI):

Talk with your doctor to be sure that you are using your MDI correctly. It might help if you practice in front of a mirror. Use the inhaler exactly as your doctor has prescribed.

Check that you have the correct medicine in the inhaler. If you use several inhalers, put a label on each one so that you know which one to use at the right time.

Check how much medicine is in the inhaler. Check the label of your inhaler medicine to see how many inhalations should be in the canister. If you know how many breaths you can take, you can replace your inhaler before you run out. Learn how to test your canister to estimate how much medicine is left. Your doctor or pharmacist can help you with this.

**Use a spacer if you have problems getting the correct timing when you use an inhaler or if you are using corticosteroids.**



**A plan for life.**

Capital District Physicians' Health Plan, Inc.  
Capital District Physicians' Healthcare Network, Inc.  
CDPHP Universal Benefits,® Inc.

# Peak Expiratory Flow



**Remove any gum or food you may have in your mouth.**

**1** Put the pointer on the gauge of the peak flow meter to 0 or the lowest number on the meter. In this photograph, this is about 50.



**2** Attach the mouthpiece to the peak flow meter. Some meters don't have a separate mouthpiece.



**3** While standing, take a deep breath.



**4** Put the peak flow meter mouthpiece in your mouth, and close your lips tightly around the outside of the mouthpiece. Don't put your tongue inside the mouthpiece.



**5** Breathe out as hard and as fast as you can for 1 or 2 seconds. A hard and fast breath usually produces a "huff" sound.



**6** Check the number on the gauge, and write it down. This is your peak expiratory flow (PEF). In the photograph at left, the PEF is about 180. **Repeat the steps two more times.** After you have blown into the meter three times, take the highest number you received, and write it in your asthma diary or on another record sheet.

If you have never used a peak flow meter, talk with your health professional about how to use it correctly, and then practice using it.

**Measure your PEF routinely.** Check your breathing regularly, even if you are feeling good. PEF is lowest in the early morning and highest in the afternoon. When you measure your PEF once a day, **it needs to be done first thing in the morning before you use your asthma medicine.**

If you cough or make a mistake during the testing, do the test over.

Different brands of meters may give different values for results. If you change meters, you will need to determine your asthma zones using the new meter.

**NOTE:** If your best effort is in your red zone, take your relief medication immediately and call your doctor or go to the emergency room.