Using Your Inhaler
How to use Inhaled Asthma Medicines

◆ Steps for using a metered-dose inhaler (MDI) - such as Proventil®, Ventolin® and Albuterol:
1. Remove the cap and hold the inhaler upright.
2. Shake the inhaler.
3. Breathe out all the way.
4. Put the mouthpiece one to two inches from your open mouth.
5. Press down on the inhaler to release the medicine, while you start to breathe in slowly.
6. Continue to breathe in slowly (for 3 to 5 seconds).
7. Hold your breath for about 10 seconds. Then breathe out.
THIS IS ONE PUFF!
8. Repeat steps 2-7 for more puffs as directed by your health care provider.
9. If you are on a bronchodilator inhaler wait 1 minute between puffs. You do not need to wait between puffs of inhaled steroids. Be sure to rinse your mouth with water after inhaler use.

◆ A spacer (or holding chamber) makes it easier for you to use the MDI.
1. Remove the cap of the MDI and attach the MDI to the spacer.
2. Shake well.
3. Put the mouthpiece of the spacer into your mouth, exhale, and close your lips and teeth around it.
4. Press down on the inhaler to release the medicine. This puts one puff of medicine into the spacer.
5. Breathe in slowly (for 3 to 5 seconds), and then hold your breath for about 10 seconds.
7. Take in another slow breath through the mouthpiece of the spacer (but do not spray the medicine).
THIS IS ONE PUFF!
8. Repeat steps 2-7 for more puffs as directed by your health care provider.
9. If you are on a bronchodilator inhaler wait 1 minute between puffs. You do not need to wait between puffs of inhaled steroids. Be sure to rinse your mouth with water after inhaler use.

◆ The new dry powder inhalers - such as Serevent Diskus®, Pulmicort Turbuhaler®, Flovent Rotadisk®, and Advair Diskus®:
- Do not require spacers.
- Do not require shaking before use.
- Usually have built-in “counters” that show how many inhalations are left.
- Do not give a "blast" at the back of your throat. You will feel like you are breathing air.

Steps for using a dry powder inhaler:  
1. Exhale.
2. Close your mouth tightly around the mouthpiece.
3. Inhale RAPIDLY.
4. Hold your breath for 10 seconds, just as you would with an MDI.
5. Do not blow into the inhaler.
THIS IS ONE INHALATION (rapid puff)

Steps for using diskus:
1. Open: push thumb in thumbgrip until it snaps.
2. Click (Steadily slide lever away from you until it clicks. Don’t slide it more than once.)
3. Inhale: hold horizontally.

How long will an MDI inhaler last if used on a regular dosing schedule?
- Look at the label on the canister to see how many doses it contains.
- Figure out the total number of puffs you take each day. For example, if you take 2 puffs 3 times each day, the total number of puffs is 6 (2x3=6).
- Divide the number of doses given on the canister by the number of puffs you use each day. This tells how many days your inhaler should last.

To check how much medicine is left in the canister, remove it from the plastic casing and put it in a cup or bowl of water. This method should not be used for Tilade®, Intal®, or dry powder inhalers as it clogs them:
✔ If it sinks to the bottom, it is full.
✔ If it floats upside down, it is half full.
✔ If it floats sideways on the surface, it is empty.

Check our website: www.uhs.berkeley.edu to learn more about this medical concern or others.

For an appointment www.uhs.berkeley.edu or call 510-642-2000  
Clinic Nurse 510-643-7197 for advice
### Asthma Medications

Your clinician may prescribe asthma medications for you. They may include **quick-relief medications** and **long term control medications**. Know the names of your medications. Also know how each one works and when to use it. Use your asthma medications as directed in your treatment plan.

*This table is not a complete list of asthma medications and does not include endorsement of any type or brand. It also does not include all actions, adverse reactions, precautions, side effects, or interactions for these medications. Only your clinician can prescribe these medications. **Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist about the possible side effects and drug or food interactions of any medication you use.**

<table>
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<th>Types of Medications</th>
<th>Examples of Medications</th>
<th>Possible Side Effects</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quick Relief</strong></td>
<td><strong>Short-acting Bronchodilators</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inhaled:</strong> abuterol (Ventolin®, ProAir®, Proventil®); piritorel (Maxair®); Xopenex®</td>
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<td>These medications work quickly to open the airways, making it easier to breathe right away.</td>
<td><strong>Anticholinergics (not to be used alone for quick relief)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inhaled:</strong> ipratropium (Atrovent®)</td>
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<td><strong>Corticosteroids</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inhaled:</strong> beclomethasone (Qvar®, Boclovent®), Vancort®; triamcinolone (Azmacort®); fluticasone (Flovent®); budesonide (Pulmicort®); mometasone (Asmanex®)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Long-acting Bronchodilators</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inhaled:</strong> salmeterol (Serentiva®)</td>
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<td>These medications help keep your asthma under control and reduce your chances of having a flare-up. They work by preventing or reducing airway inflammation (swelling). In order to be effective, these medications must be used consistently.</td>
<td><strong>Combination Drugs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inhaled:</strong> fluticasone and salmeterol (Advair®), Budesonide and Formoterol (Symbicort®)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Other Anti-Inflammatories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inhaled:</strong> cromolyn (Intal®); nedocromil (Tilade®)</td>
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<td><strong>Leukotriene Modifiers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oral:</strong> zafirlukast (Accolate®); montelukast (Singulair® )</td>
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**Side effects are rare. **

**Acne; weight gain; mood changes; high blood pressure; stomach, eye or bone problems.**

**If used for a long time and stopped too quickly, serious side effects may occur.**

**Use a spacer and rinse your mouth with water after inhaling to help reduce side effects.**

**Possible side effects same as corticosteroids and long acting bronchodilators. No spacer needed.**

**Dry throat; nausea.**

**Headache; dizziness; insomnia; nervousness; muscle twitching; faster heartbeat; nausea.**