Using a Metered Dose Inhaler (MDI) with a Spacer

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

Metered Dose Inhaler (MDI)

Commonly called a pump or puffer

- When the inhaler is pumped, it gives just the right amount of medicine with each pump.
- A spacer should always used when taking this medicine.
- An inhaler can travel with you when you leave home.

Spacers should always be used with metered dose inhalers. It helps slow down the speed of the medicine so it can get into the lungs and not to other parts of the body.
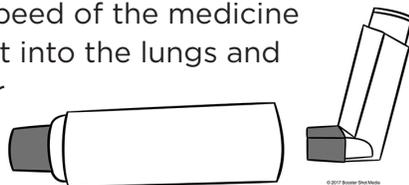
Preparing to use an inhaler with a spacer:

Step 1: Wash your hands!	
Step 2: Remove the cap from the mouthpiece of the metered dose inhaler	
Step 3: Look in both ends of the spacer for any objects that don't belong there	
Step 4: Shake the MDI	
Step 5: Put the mouthpiece of the MDI into the end of the spacer	
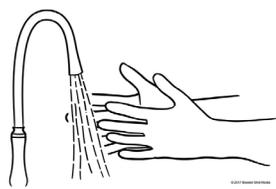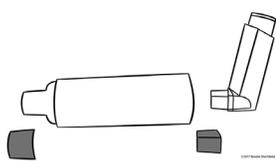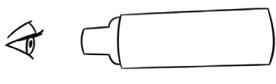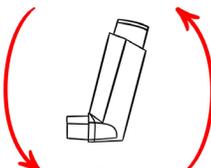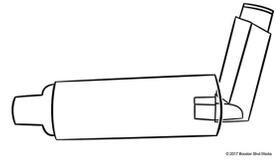
Using an inhaler with a spacer:

Step 1: Take a deep breath in and blow the air out of your lungs	
Step 2: Put the mouthpiece of the spacer in your mouth and wrap your lips around tightly	
Step 3: Squeeze one puff of the inhaler into the spacer	
Step 4: Breathe in slowly through the mouthpiece until you can't breathe in anymore (if you hear a noise from the spacer, take a slower breath)	
Step 5: Remove the spacer from your mouth, close your mouth, and hold your breath for 10 seconds	
Step 6: Blow the air out of the lungs	
Step 7: Repeat steps 1 to 6 for every puff you take	1 2 3 4 5 6
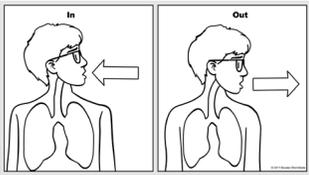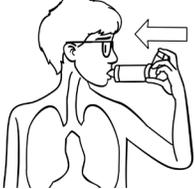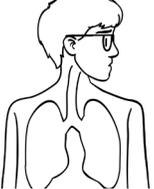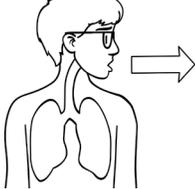
How to clean a spacer:

- Remove the inhaler from the spacer.
- If possible, take the pieces of the spacer apart.
- Soak (do not scrub) the pieces of the spacer in warm soapy water for 10 minutes.
- Rinse the spacer with warm water to remove any leftover soap.
- Let all the parts dry completely before putting the spacer back together.
- Wash at least once a week.

Special instructions:

- One spacer can be used for all of your metered dose inhalers. You do not need a separate spacer for each inhaler.
- A spacer should last at least one year.
- Check your medicine to make sure it is not expired.