Using a Metered Dose Inhaler (MDI) with a Spacer and a Mask

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
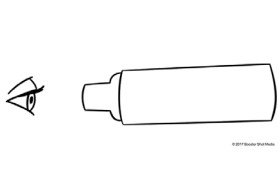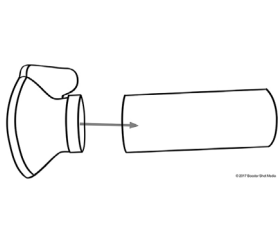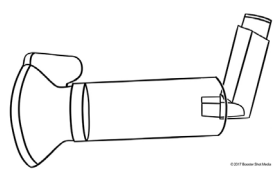
Metered Dose Inhaler (MDI)
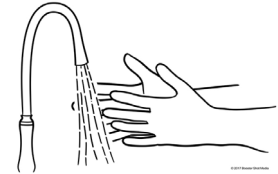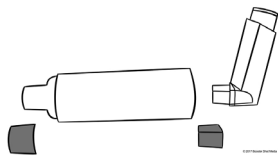
Commonly called a pump or puffer

- When the inhaler is pumped, it gives just the right amount of medicine with each pump.
- A spacer should always be used when taking this medicine.
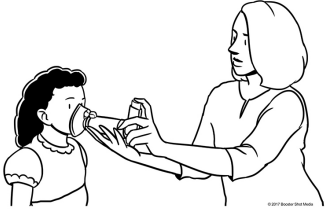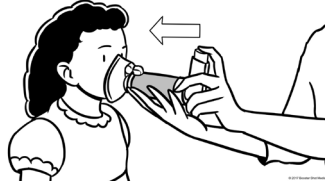- An inhaler can travel with you when you leave home.
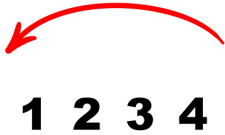
Spacers are always used with metered dose inhalers. It helps slow down the speed of the medicine so it can get into the lungs and not to other parts of the body.
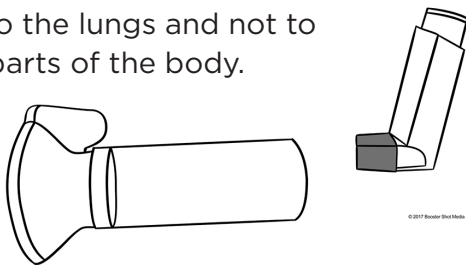
Preparing to use a MDI with a spacer and a mask:

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: If the spacer does not already have a mask attached, put the mask on the mouthpiece of the spacer	
Step 5: Shake the MDI	
Step 6: Put the mouthpiece of the MDI into the end of the spacer	

Using an inhaler with a spacer and a mask:

Step 1: Gently put the mask over the child's nose and mouth. Lightly press the mask against the face so no air can escape. A good seal is needed for the medicine to get into the lungs.	
Step 2: Squeeze one puff of the inhaler into the spacer	
Step 3: Keep the mask on the child's face and watch the child breathe 6 to 10 breaths.	
Step 4: Repeat steps 1 to 4 for every puff you take.	

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.

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.