

Puffer and inhaler care

Cleaning your inhaler

Different types of inhalers need to be cleaned in different ways.

Your puffer or inhaler will come with instructions in the package. Always check the package insert for any specific instructions.

If you aren't sure which sort of puffer or inhaler you have, ask your pharmacist or check our website "How-to video" library.



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Disclaimer: It is important to note that information contained in this fact sheet is not intended to replace professional medical advice. Any questions regarding a medical diagnosis or treatment should be directed to a medical practitioner.

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Puffers (standard MDIs)

A standard puffer consists of a plastic case or holder with a cap, and a metal canister. The plastic case needs to be cared for differently depending on the type of medication you are using the puffer for. The metal canister does not need to be cleaned and should be removed if you are washing the case.

Reliever medication (e.g. Asmol, Ventolin)

Wash the blue plastic case around once a week. Make sure it's completely dry before using again.

Cromone preventer medication (e.g. Intal, Intal Forte, Tilade)

Puffers for these medications must be washed every day to avoid clogging. Many people who take these medications get two puffers at a time so that they always have a clean and dry one handy.

Wash the white or yellow plastic case every day. Allow it to dry for 24 hours before using again.

Corticosteroid-containing preventer medication (e.g. Alvesco, Flixotide, Flutiform, Qvar, Seretide, Symbicort)

These puffers need to stay dry, so must never be washed. The mouthpiece can be wiped with a dry tissue if needed.

Dry powder inhalers

Dry powder inhalers include Accuhaler, Breezhaler, Ellipta, Genuair and Turbuhaler.

These inhalers need to stay dry, so must never be washed. The mouthpiece can be wiped with a dry tissue if needed.

The Handihaler capsule dry powder inhaler is an exception. This inhaler needs regular cleaning. Wash the inhaler at least monthly and make sure it's completely dry before using again.

Mist inhaler

The only mist inhaler is the Respimat, used for the medications Spiriva and Spiolto.

Wipe the mouthpiece inside and out with a damp cloth once a week. Do not remove the metal cartridge.

Disposing of inhalers

Like any medication, out-of-date or unwanted inhalers need to be disposed of carefully.

If the inhaler or canister is empty, it can go in the usual rubbish collection.

If you aren't sure if the inhaler or canister is empty or if there is still some medication left, return it to your pharmacy for disposal.

You can put the puffer's plastic case in the household recycling bin.

Return Unwanted Medicines project

Return Unwanted Medicines is a national program that provides free and safe disposal of unwanted medicines through local pharmacies.

If you are taking your unwanted inhalers to the pharmacy for disposal, it's a good opportunity to check the bathroom cabinet for any other old medicines that should be thrown away.

Old medicines lying around the home 'just in case' are dangerous...

- If taken when they're out-of-date
- If taken when not prescribed for you
- If in reach of little prying fingers

Details about pharmacy collection, can be found on the Return Unwanted Medicines Project website returnmed.com.au

Need more information?

Visit National Asthma Council Australia's website nationalasthma.org.au