

How to Use Your Albuterol Inhaler for Asthma Anti-Inflammatory Reliever (AIR) Therapy

What is the purpose of this medication?

Albuterol is a quick relief (rescue) inhaler. It relaxes the muscles around your airways to prevent or treat bronchospasms (tightening of the airways in your lungs). Albuterol will work within minutes and make breathing easier.



- After you use albuterol, you may feel jittery (nervous or unable to relax).
- Albuterol is used to treat sudden symptoms of your health condition.
Always carry your rescue inhaler with you.
- **If you need to use albuterol more than 2 times a week, please call your doctor.**

What is asthma anti-inflammatory reliever (AIR) therapy?

Asthma AIR therapy is a new strategy to better manage asthma when patients have an asthma flare-up (also called an asthma attack). It involves an increase of inhaled corticosteroid medication to treat inflammation along with a short-acting beta-agonist medication to treat bronchospasms. In some cases, your regular asthma medication may be the same medication used for AIR therapy because it works quickly.

How and when should I prime this medication?

- If your albuterol inhaler is new, or if you have not used it in 2 weeks, you will need to **prime** your albuterol inhaler. Priming an inhaler means making sure the medication is mixed with the spray so you will get the

correct dose of medication when you use the inhaler.

- Prime your inhaler by removing the cap, shaking the inhaler for 5 seconds, and spraying it once away from you. Repeat these steps for a total of 3 sprays.

How do I use my albuterol inhaler for asthma AIR therapy?

1. Remove the cap. Put your middle or index finger on top of the canister and put your thumb under the mouthpiece of the inhaler.
2. Shake your inhaler for 5-10 seconds.
 - If you're able to use a spacer, or if your doctor has recommended you use a spacer, attach the spacer to your inhaler after shaking it and then remove the mouthpiece cap from your spacer. If you don't have a spacer, still use the inhaler for AIR therapy.
3. Breathe out fully (to prepare to breathe in the medication).
4. Put the mouthpiece in your mouth and close your lips around it. Do not block the mouthpiece with your teeth or tongue.
 - If you're using a spacer, make sure to hold the spacer with the inhaler upright and tilt your head back slightly when you close your lips around the spacer's mouthpiece.
5. Push the top of the canister all the way down one time while breathing in deeply and slowly through your mouth.
 - If you're using a spacer, push the canister down to release the medication into the spacer. Then breathe in slowly and deeply through the spacer mouthpiece.
6. Hold your breath for 5-10 seconds, and then breathe out.
 - If your doctor told you to take more than 1 dose (puff), wait 30 seconds and then repeat the steps above.
7. As part of AIR therapy, we've prescribed you a second inhaler called an inhaled corticosteroid (such as QVAR RediHaler[®], Flovent[®], Alvesco[®], Asmanex[®], etc.). **Take 1 puff of this second inhaler with every puff of**

albuterol. You can find instructions for using this second inhaler in a separate handout.

- AIR therapy works by using albuterol and another inhaled corticosteroid medication together. For this therapy to work, you should not be using your albuterol inhaler by itself.
8. Put the cap back on your albuterol inhaler.

How do I clean my albuterol inhaler?

Clean the inhaler once per week to prevent the medication from building up and blocking the spray through the mouthpiece. Follow these cleaning steps:

1. Remove the cap from the mouthpiece.
2. Use a clean, dry cloth or cotton swab to clean the small circular opening where the medication sprays out of the canister.
3. Wipe the inside of the mouthpiece with a clean tissue.
4. Put the cap back on the mouthpiece.

Where can I learn more inhaler use?

To see video demonstrations of how to use inhalers, visit:

[CareGuides.med.umich.edu/browse-by-medical-service/asthma/asthma-how-to-use-inhalers-videos](https://careguides.med.umich.edu/browse-by-medical-service/asthma/asthma-how-to-use-inhalers-videos)

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