

# HOW TO USE A NEBULIZER



A nebulizer is a machine that delivers a fine, steady mist of medicine through a mouthpiece or mask.

## HOW TO USE IT

Here are general steps for how to use and clean a nebulizer. **Always read and follow the instructions that come with your nebulizer. If you don't use your nebulizer correctly, you won't get the medicine you need.**

1. Wash hands well.
2. Put together the nebulizer machine, tubing, medicine cup, and mouthpiece or mask as shown in your instructions.
3. Put the prescribed amount of medicine into the nebulizer cup.
4. Place the mouthpiece in your mouth and close your lips around it to form a tight seal. If your child uses a mask, make sure it fits snugly against the child's face and covers their nose and mouth.
5. Turn on the nebulizer machine. You should see a light mist coming from the back of the tube opposite the mouthpiece or from the mask.
6. Take normal breaths through the mouth until the medicine cup is empty or the mist stops. This takes about 10 minutes.
7. Take the mouthpiece out of your mouth (or remove your child's mask) and turn off the machine.
8. If the medicine is an inhaled corticosteroid, rinse your (or your child's) mouth with water and spit it out. Rinsing helps to prevent an infection in the mouth. If using a mask, also wash your child's face.



Example of a nebulizer



NIH Publication No. 21-HL-8163  
October 2021

**LEARN MORE  
BREATHE BETTER**

Learn More Breathe Better® is a registered trademark of HHS.

## HOW TO CLEAN AND STORE IT

### After each treatment:

- Wash hands well.
- Wash the medicine cup and mouthpiece or mask with warm water and mild soap. Do not wash the tubing.
- Rinse well and shake off excess water. Air dry parts on a paper towel.

### Once a week:

- Disinfect nebulizer parts to help kill any germs. Follow the instructions that come with your device.
- Do not wash or boil the tubing.
- Air dry parts on a paper towel.

### Between uses:

- Store nebulizer parts in a dry, clean plastic storage bag. If the nebulizer is used by more than one person, keep each person's medicine cup, mouthpiece or mask, and tubing in a separate, labeled bag to prevent the spread of germs.
- Wipe surface with a clean, damp cloth as needed. Cover nebulizer machine with a clean, dry cloth and store as stated in the instructions.
- Replace medicine cup, mouthpiece, mask, tubing, filter, and other parts as stated in the instructions or when they appear worn or damaged.



## ALWAYS REMEMBER...

If you have asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or another chronic lung disease, it is important to:

- Take your medicine as prescribed.
- Use the proper technique to deliver the medicine to your lungs.

Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare professional (such as nurse practitioner, physician assistant, nurse, respiratory therapist, or asthma educator) to show you how to use and clean your nebulizer. Review your technique at each follow-up visit.