

## Patient information

### **Pulmonary Rehabilitation - Respiratory Medication**

Therapies - Aintree Hospital

The medication used to treat COPD or asthma is most commonly given via an inhaler.

This is because the medicine is delivered straight into your lung where it is needed and allows us to use smaller doses.

Using smaller doses helps to reduce your risk of experiencing side effects due to your medication.

The way that you use your inhaler is very important (this is known as your technique).

If you have poor technique, most of the dose can be wasted.

If you are unsure about how to use your inhaler, please ask your respiratory nurse, GP or pharmacist.

Videos that demonstrate inhaler technique are available from [www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk).

If you are still having difficulty using your inhaler, you may find a spacer helpful.

Spacer devices are only suitable for some types of inhalers, so please ask your GP or respiratory nurse.

They will be able to provide one of these for you. Spacers allow you to breathe more naturally when using your inhaler.

#### **Preventer inhalers**

Inhaler therapy is generally divided into two main categories, preventers and relievers:

Preventers are very important as they reduce the number of “attacks” you may suffer by reducing inflammation.

Whilst you may not feel that relievers work straight away, they work in the background to help slow down your disease or stop you from having attacks.

Preventers contain different combinations of medication. Some contain steroids, others steroids with long acting relievers and others steroids, long acting relievers and antimuscarinics.

The most commonly used preventers include Fostair and Seretide.

If your inhaler contains a steroid, you may find that you get a sore mouth or even oral thrush.

The best way to avoid this is to wash your mouth out with water after using the inhaler, or even use the inhaler just before you brush your teeth.

### **Reliever inhalers**

Relievers are short acting medicines that are used when you are feeling breathless.

Examples include salbutamol and terbutaline.

Relievers work quickly and help to widen your airway and help you to breathe easier, however this effect does not last very long.

### **Cleaning your inhalers**

It is important to clean your inhaler regularly and inspect it for damage.

Instructions on how to clean your inhaler can be found inside the patient information leaflet supplied with your inhaler.

Spacers should be cleaned with clean warm water with liquid soap and left to dry naturally.

Do not dry with a towel as this creates static which makes the drug stick to the inside of the spacer.

When using your inhaler, always check that the mouthpiece is clear before use.

If you are struggling with any of your inhalers, please let us know.

There are many different types of inhalers out there and if one does not suit you we can help you find one that is better suited to your needs.

### **Smoking cessation**

It is never too late to stop smoking. With support from your local smoking cessation service, you are more likely to quit than if you stopped without support.

If you are ready to quit, or even just considering it, please let us know.

Some community pharmacies offer free advice on quitting and can give you vouchers to redeem for nicotine patches, gum or inhalators.

### **Steroid tablets**

You may be prescribed short courses of steroids (usually prednisolone tablets) to help you recover from a severe “flare” of your condition, or you may be on long term steroid treatment.

Short courses of steroids can still have side effects, which can include increasing your appetite (causing weight gain) and stomach irritation.

If you have recently had a course of steroid and need another one, your doctor should prescribe you a course that reduces slowly over a few days.

This is to help reduce your chance of side effects like feeling very tired.

## **Antibiotics**

Antibiotics are only prescribed if it is thought that an infection has caused your condition to worsen.

Antibiotics will not work if you have a viral infection.

It is very important to complete the course of antibiotics given to you by the doctor, even if you feel better.

Do not share your antibiotics with other family members. Common antibiotics used for chest infections include amoxicillin and clarithromycin.

## **Oxygen**

**Some people benefit from the use of oxygen at home. Your consultant or GP will prescribe oxygen for you if it is required.**

**It may be supplied in cylinders or via a machine called an oxygen concentrator.**

**It is very important that you do not smoke if using oxygen at home.**

## **Nebuliser servicing and repair**

### **Nebulisers**

Some medications are available as nebules, which are given through a nebuliser machine.

Common medications given via this route include salbutamol and ipratropium.

Your doctor will decide if you need a nebuliser.

### **Machine breakdown -Medical Engineering**

If your nebuliser machine breaks, you can contact **Cardiothoracic Centre, Broadgreen** to arrange repairs.

**Tel 0151 600 1571** (Mon-Fri, 1-3pm).

You will need to take your nebuliser machine to the centre but please ring prior to attending.

There is a servicing charge. If parts of your nebuliser need replacing or repairing you will be contacted with a quote for the cost of the repair before work is commenced.

A loan service is available while your nebuliser is in for repair. Formal proof of identity is required e.g. driving licence.

The same service is also offered by **Evergreen Nebulisers Ltd, Wigan. Tel No: 01942 701210.**

They also offer home visits and will collect and deliver your machine at extra cost.

Alternatively, you can contact the nebuliser manufacturer. The machine would have to be posted to the manufacturer. However this is a costly option.

### **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

### **Further information**

**If you have any questions please contact the Therapies Department  
Aintree Hospital**

**Lower Lane**

**Liverpool**

**L9 7AL**

**Telephone number: 0151 529 3910**

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