How to Use Your Metered-Dose Inhaler (Puffer)
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A metered-dose inhaler, called an MDI or puffer for short, is a pressurized inhaler that delivers medication using a propellant spray. This means the inhaler pushes the medication out for you to breathe in.

Cleaning your MDI

To clean your MDI, follow the instructions that came with it. For most MDIs, the steps will be:

1. Pull out the metal canister.
2. Clean the plastic parts using mild soap and water. (Never wash the metal canister or put it in water.)
3. Let the plastic parts dry in the air. (For example, leave them out overnight.)
4. Put the MDI back together.
5. Test the MDI by releasing a puff into the air.
To use an MDI:

1. Shake the inhaler well before use (3 or 4 shakes).
2. Take off the cap.
3. Breathe out, away from your inhaler.
4. Bring the inhaler close to your mouth. Keep it about 1-2 inches away from your mouth.
5. With an open mouth, start to breathe in **slowly**. Press the top of your inhaler once and keep breathing in slowly until you have taken a full breath.
6. Close your mouth and hold your breath for about 10 seconds or as long as you can, then breathe out.

If you need a second puff, wait 30 seconds, shake your inhaler again, and repeat steps 3-6. After you’ve used your MDI, rinse out your mouth and write down the number of doses taken.

**Store all puffers at room temperature.**
Medication Tips

• Know when to use the **preventer** and when to use the **reliever/rescue** inhaler.

• After using a **preventer** inhaler, rinse your mouth with water, gargle, and spit out. **Do not swallow.**

• Carry your reliever inhaler with you at all times.

• In cold weather, carry your inhaler in a pocket close to your body.

Date: _____________________________ YYYY / MM / DD

Your inhalers are:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number of puffs</th>
<th>How often?</th>
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Examples of puffers

Reliever/rescue inhaler (short-acting bronchodilator)
› Airomir® (salbutamol)
› Atrovent®
› Ventolin® (salbutamol)

Long-acting bronchodilator with anti-inflammatory
› Advair®
› Zenhale®

Preventer inhaler (anti-inflammatory)
› Alvesco®
› Flovent®
› Qvar®

What are your questions? Please ask. We are here to help you.
Important reminders about MDIs

- Always follow the instructions that come with your MDI.
- Keep your reliever MDI somewhere where you can get it quickly if you need it, but out of children’s reach.
- Show your doctor, pharmacist, or asthma educator how you’re using your metered-dose inhaler.
- Store your MDI at room temperature. If it gets cold, warm it using only your hands.
- Never puncture or break the canister, or try to warm it using anything except your hands.
- When you begin using an MDI, write the start date on the canister.
- Check the expiry date on the MDI before you use it.
- If you’re having trouble using your MDI, ask your doctor or pharmacist for tips or to recommend another device.
- Many doctors recommend the use of a spacer, also known as a holding device, to be used with the MDI. You can ask your healthcare provider for more information about this.
- Do you think your MDI is empty? Do not float the canister in water. Shake it – if it feels light or you do not feel liquid moving, it is empty and needs to be replaced. Some devices have counters and “0” means it is empty.
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For more information, go to http://library.novascotia.ca

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.
Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice.
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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.