

# Spacer Use

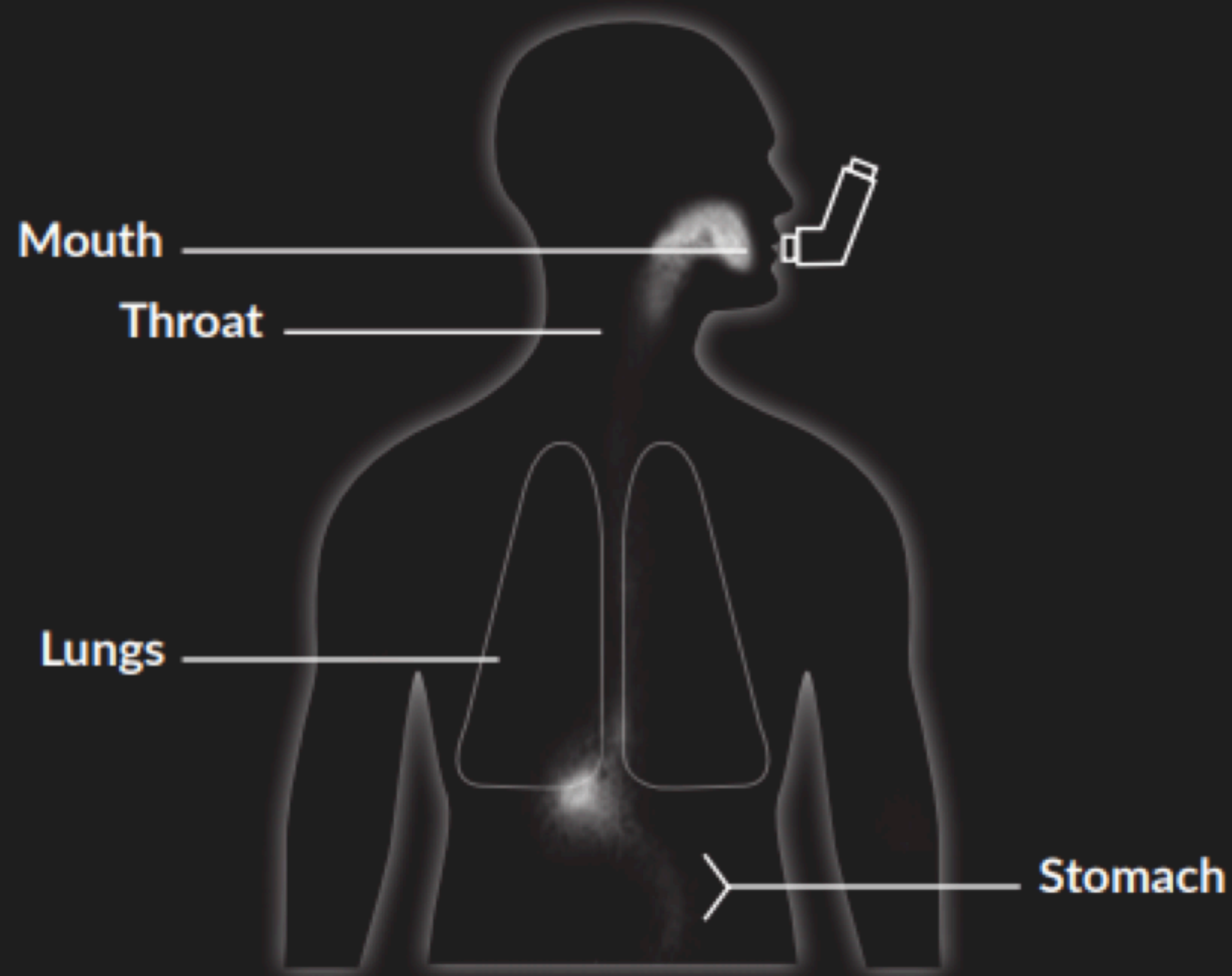
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# Objectives

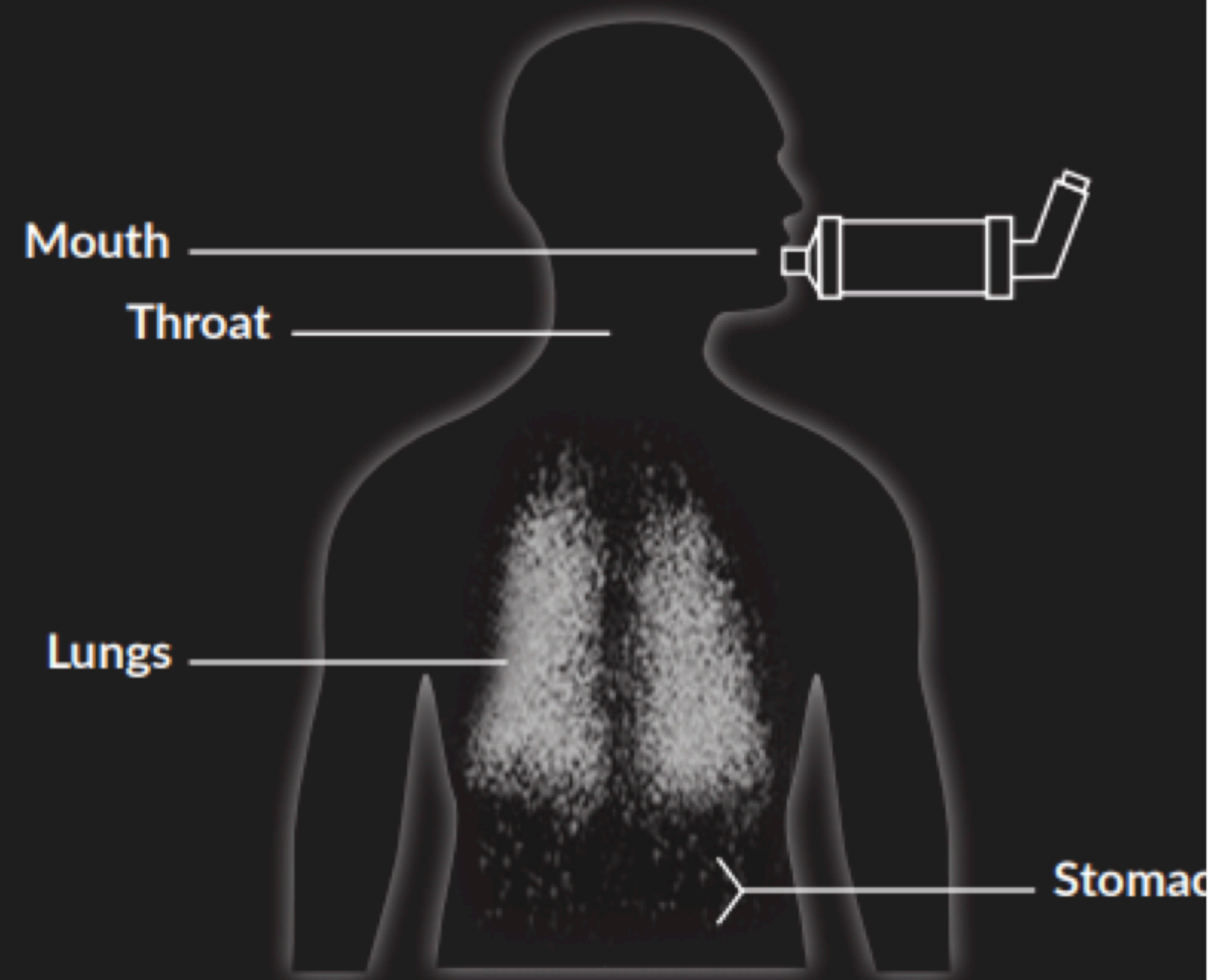
- ▶ How does your asthma medication get into your lungs?
- ▶ Important things to know about using your spacer
- ▶ Using a spacer - demo
  - ▶ Getting Ready
  - ▶ Breathing techniques
- ▶ Device Cleaning
- ▶ Refill/Replacing your inhaler

# Where Does Your Asthma Medicine Go?



## Using Just Your Inhaler

Metered-dose inhalers can spray medicine as fast as 60 miles per hour, causing the medicine to hit the back of your throat or roof of your mouth.



## Using Inhaler With Spacer or Valved Holding Chamber (VHC)

By simply attaching a valved holding chamber or spacer to your metered-dose inhaler, you can:





## Things to know about using a spacer

- ▶ How to use the spacer with your asthma medications:
  - priming
  - breathing
  - cleaning
- ▶ Rinse the mouth/face after Inhaled corticosteroid (ICS) use
- ▶ Do not use a spacer with any dry powdered medications



# How to Use a Spacer: Getting Ready

- ▶ If you have not used the inhaler in a while, you may need to **prime** it
- ▶ Take the cap off the inhaler and spacer.
- ▶ Shake the inhaler hard 10 to 15 times before each use.
- ▶ Attach the spacer to the inhaler.
- ▶ Sit up straight and chin up
- ▶ Hold the spacer away from your mouth and breathe out gently to empty your lungs.

# How to Use a Spacer: Breathe in Slowly

- ▶ Put the spacer between your teeth and close your lips tightly around it.
- ▶ If using face mask, secure mask by getting nose and mouth in mask space. Make sure fit is correct.
- ▶ Are you still sitting up and chin up?
- ▶ Spray one puff into the spacer by pressing down on the inhaler.
- ▶ Breathe in slowly and breathe and deeply



# How to Use a Spacer: Holding your Breath

- ▶ Hold your breath as you count to 10, if you can. This lets the medicine reach deep into your lungs.
- ▶ For children that can not hold for a count of 10, have them breathe slow and regular for approximately 6 breaths.
- ▶ If you are using inhaled, quick-relief medicine (Albuterol, Ventolin, Pro-air), wait about 1 minute before you take your next puff.
- ▶ You do not need to wait a minute between puffs for your controller medicines.
- ▶ Put the caps back on the inhaler and spacer.
- ▶ **After using your inhaler, if using an ICS, rinse your mouth with water, gargle, and spit. Do not swallow the water. This helps reduce the side effects from your medicine.**

# Device Cleaning

To clean:

- For your inhaler:
  - Remove the metal canister from the L-shaped plastic mouthpiece
  - Rinse only the mouthpiece and cap in warm water and dry
- For your spacer:
  - Cleaning should be done once a week.
  - Take the spacer apart and soak in warm soapy water.
  - Rinse and shake dry. (Never dry the inside of the spacer.
  - Let air dry on paper towel
  - A good way to keep both of these clean, place in a storage bag that can zip close



# Refill/Replacing your Inhaler

- Most inhalers come with counters on the canister. Keep an eye on the counter and replace the inhaler before you run out of medicine.
- **Rule of thumb:** if the canister reads "9", it is time to call the pharmacy for a refill!

# Contact Us

If you have questions about asthma,  
please reach out for more information:

- ▶ Email: [PedsAsthma@med.cornell.edu](mailto:PedsAsthma@med.cornell.edu)
- ▶ Phone: 212-746-4508

Visit our website for links to more resources: [https://  
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