



PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

Inhaler and spacer technique

Correct use and teaching of a pressurised metered-dose inhaler with a spacer, for treatment in the ED and for safe discharge.



EM Orbit

Patient reference

Date

Time

Completed by

Equipment ready

- ☐ Pressurised metered-dose inhaler (e.g. salbutamol)
- ☐ Large-volume or small-volume spacer compatible with the inhaler
- ☐ Face mask attachment for young children or patients unable to seal on a mouthpiece
- ☐ Peak flow meter
- ☐ Written asthma action plan

Before · Assessment

- ☐ Assess severity first
- ☐ **Patients with life-threatening features need oxygen-driven nebulised treatment and senior review, not spacer teaching**
- ☐ Check the inhaler: correct drug, in date, dose counter or not empty
- ☐ Check the spacer fits the inhaler and has no cracks; check the valve moves
- ☐ Ask the patient to show you how they normally use their inhaler before teaching

During · Preparing the device

- ☐ Sit or stand the patient upright
- ☐ Remove the inhaler cap and check the mouthpiece is clear
- ☐ Shake the inhaler well
- ☐ Prime the inhaler if it is new or has not been used recently, per the manufacturer
- ☐ Insert the inhaler into the spacer

During · Delivering a dose — tidal breathing method

- ☐ Ask the patient to breathe out gently, away from the spacer
- ☐ Place the mouthpiece between the teeth and seal the lips around it
- ☐ Press the inhaler once to release one puff into the spacer

- ☐ Breathe in and out slowly through the spacer for about five breaths
- ☐ **Release one puff at a time into the spacer; do not fire several puffs in at once**
- ☐ Remove the spacer, shake the inhaler again and repeat for each further puff

During · Delivering a dose — single-breath method (older children and adults)

- ☐ After one puff, take one slow, deep breath in through the spacer
- ☐ Hold the breath for about 10 seconds, or as long as comfortable, then breathe out slowly
- ☐ Wait about 30–60 seconds and shake the inhaler before the next puff

During · Acute treatment in the ED

- ☐ Give the bronchodilator dose via spacer per EMOD-CP-08 (adults) or EMOD-CP-78 (children), one puff at a time
- ☐ Reassess peak flow, saturations and work of breathing after treatment

- ☐ **If the patient is not improving or deteriorates, escalate to nebulised treatment and senior review**

After · Teaching and discharge

- ☐ Ask the patient to demonstrate the technique back to you and correct errors
- ☐ Rinse the mouth and spit after inhaled corticosteroid doses
- ☐ Explain spacer care
- ☐ Make sure the patient has a spacer to take home
- ☐ Give or review a written asthma action plan and check preventer use
- ☐ Explain when to seek urgent help
- ☐ Arrange follow-up with primary care or the asthma nurse within the time recommended by guidance
- ☐ Document the technique check, device used and education given



A drafted procedure checklist, awaiting senior review. Perform procedures only within your training, competence and local policy. It does not replace your clinical judgement.

EM Orbit · Emergency medicine, in one orbit · proc-inhaler-spacer · red rows are the steps that must not be missed