



Nebulizers

Nebulizers are small air compressors used to administer medicine. Users put a nebulizer mask on their face or use a mouthpiece to breathe in mists of air mixed with medicine. Nebulizers do not require oxygen tanks; they use the air in the room.

Who should use a nebulizer?

A health care provider may recommend a nebulizer for a variety of reasons. Nebulizers are often prescribed for infants and children who are not coordinated enough to use an inhaler. The liquid vials of medicine used with nebulizers can be less expensive than purchasing the same medicine in an inhaler.

However, nebulizers are not always the best option for someone with asthma. They are not as portable as inhalers, so someone who only has a nebulizer may not have easy access to their medicine if their asthma acts up away from home. Some asthma medicines are also not available for nebulizers.

How do I use a nebulizer?

If you are prescribed a nebulizer, follow these steps carefully:

- Wash your hands
- Open the medication cup and fill it with medication as prescribed by your health care provider
- Secure the cap
- Attach either a mouthpiece or mask to the end of the medication cup
- Hook one end of the tubing to the medication cup and the other end to the nebulizer
- If using a mouthpiece, seal lips tightly around the mouthpiece. If using a mask, place mask firmly on the face
- Turn on the nebulizer. Breathe normally through the mouthpiece or mask. Continue until you no longer see the medication mist (about 10 minutes)

How do I clean and take care of a nebulizer?

It is very important to clean your nebulizer to prevent infections. Here are a few tips to help you:

- Wash your hands before touching medicine
- After each use, remove the medication cup and rinse with warm water. Place on a paper towel and allow it to air dry
- Once a week, clean medication cup in mild soapy water or one part vinegar to two parts water. Rinse well and place on a paper towel to air dry
- Replace the nebulizer cup and tubing every six months
- Change the filter in your nebulizer when it becomes discolored
- Never wash or clean the tubing because mold can grow inside