


# INHALER, EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUE

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*Older people in care settings experience even greater difficulties in managing their inhalers effectively due to factors such as poor dexterity, memory problems and lack of education and advice on effective technique. Even for those who receive assistance in using their inhalers from a staff member, there may be a risk that the staff member's technique is ineffective, which may also have a serious impact on the health of the person with COPD.*



By ensuring that both residents who self-medicate and staff with responsibility for administering inhalers, all work to a standard technique which is taught and monitored, you can reduce the risk of respiratory problems for those in your care. In turn, this will avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and life-threatening complications.

## 5 Steps to Ensure Effective Inhaler Technique

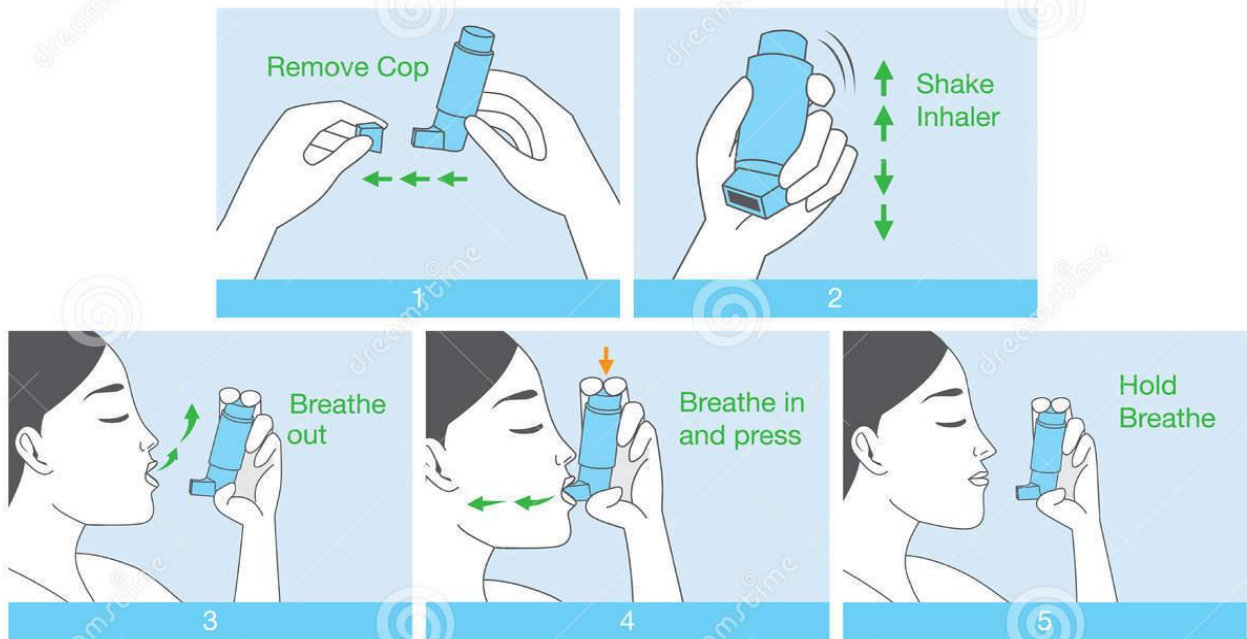
1. **Breath out first:** Breathing out first creates more space in their airways for the next breath, allowing a longer and deeper breath. This enables the medication to reach the small spaces inside the lungs more effectively.
2. **Encourage breath holding:** Encourage the person to hold their breath for 10 seconds after inhaling. This will keep the airways still and allow more time for the medication to reach the lungs.
3. **Shake the inhaler:** 'Press and breathe' type inhalers should always be shaken beforehand to make sure that the contents are properly mixed and the correct dose is delivered.
4. **Get the timing right:** It is essential that the person times their breath to coincide with the release of the medication from the inhaler. Breathing too early means that only part of the breath will be available to inhale the dose into the lungs and the full dose will not be obtained.
5. **Space the doses:** Allow at least 30–60 seconds between each dose to allow time for the use to recover and the dose to reach the lungs. Do not forget to shake the inhaler to ensure the medicine is properly mixed.

**Staff should provide residents who self-medicate with inhaler a copy of this procedure (including photographs overleaf), and explain to the person in detail, and supervise at the beginning until staff are satisfied that the resident has adopted the above effective technique.**

*Videos on various inhalers techniques can be downloaded and shown on a tablet to the residents from the Asthma Society Website following the link below:*

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhalers-medicines-treatments/using-inhalers/#Videos>

# How to use an Inhaler



## ASTHMA — INHALER TECHNIQUE 2

