

If you have asthma or COPD, it is important to understand potential challenges with inhaler use.



Even though there are more than 200 drug-inhaler device combinations available to treat respiratory conditions, many people still have uncontrolled asthma or COPD. Proper inhaler use has been shown to relieve symptoms or help keep asthma and COPD more controlled.

The truth is many people do not use their inhalers correctly. Get a head start by learning more about correct inhaler use and avoiding some common mistakes.

1 Is there a correct technique for using my inhaler?

Yes, and the right technique is different for each inhaler.

Incorrect technique can impact how much medication actually gets to your lungs. A study has shown that ~1/3 of people with asthma and COPD had poor technique. Technique errors can include not breathing in deeply enough. Other common errors include not exhaling fully before using your inhaler, not sealing your lips around the mouthpiece, and not holding your breath after inhaling.

The good news is that you can learn proper inhaler technique with training and practice. Make sure you read the instructions for use that come with your inhaler and talk with your doctor if you need instruction and training on using your inhaler the right way.

2 Am I using my rescue inhaler too often?

While rescue inhalers are important to relieve flare-ups, they are not meant to be used on a regular basis. If you think you may be using your rescue inhaler more than usual, consider talking to your doctor, as it might be a sign of deteriorating disease.

3 How important is it to use my maintenance inhaler as prescribed?

Maintenance inhalers are designed to help keep your asthma or COPD under control. However, many people struggle with taking their medication when they are supposed to. Approximately 50% of adults and children on long-term therapy for asthma may not be taking medications as directed at least part of the time.

4 What should I discuss with my doctor to make sure I'm using my inhaler correctly?

Medical guidelines recommend that your doctor evaluate your inhaler use and technique on a regular basis as part of your treatment plan. Talking with your doctor about your inhaler use is critical. It can be helpful to track your inhaler use rather than relying on your memory.

5 What tools are available to help people track their inhaler use?

In addition to diaries, digital health options, such as digital inhalers and apps, can help you keep track of your inhaler use.

Talk to your doctor about digital health options, including digital inhalers, that may help you track and evaluate your inhaler use as part of your treatment plan.