

## Giving Medication Inhaled by Mouth



Medication can be inhaled by mouth using an inhaler, inhaler with a spacer, a nebulizer or other device.

In addition to any medication-specific instructions, follow these principles to give medication inhaled by mouth:

### ***When using an inhaler***

- Put on gloves. You should wear gloves if:
  - ◇ the skin on your hands is cut, scabbed or broken;
  - ◇ your hands might come in contact with the child's mucous;
  - ◇ the medication to be given should not touch ***your*** skin; or
  - ◇ you feel more comfortable wearing gloves to apply the medication.
- Remove the cap and check the mouthpiece for foreign objects before using.
- Have the child breathe according to the package instructions.
- If the child needs two or more puffs, follow the instructions for how long to wait before giving another puff.
- Always watch the child use the inhaler.
- Since some inhalers will continue to spray after the medication is gone from the container, discuss with the parent if you need to count the number of puffs you give.

A spacer is used to help the child get the full dose of medication by holding the medication in the chamber long enough so the child can breathe the medication in with multiple breaths.

To help prevent the spread of germs or giving a wrong dose due to buildup of medication, keep the inhaler and spacer clean. Follow the instructions for cleaning. Never put the medication canister in water.

### ***When using a nebulizer***

- Be sure you know how to assemble the nebulizer parts and use the machine.
- Check to make sure you have all of the necessary nebulizer parts.
- Turn on the machine to make sure it is working.
- Attach the tubing and nebulizer parts to the compressor per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Some medicine used in a nebulizer must be mixed with a liquid, such as normal saline, before it is used. Others will come in a single-dose vial. Be sure to read the health care provider instructions carefully to see if you need to mix the medication before it is used.
- Put on gloves.
- Watch the child during the entire treatment to make sure (s)he gets all of the medication.



Handout 7.5

To help prevent the spread of germs or giving a wrong dose due to buildup of medication, keep the nebulizer and parts clean. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

***Sharing nebulizer machines***

Unless a nebulizer machine is labeled “for single patient use,” your program can have a nebulizer machine that is shared by two or more children. Make sure the parent agrees if you are sharing a nebulizer.

Each child must have his or her own tubing, medication cup and mouthpiece or facemask. These should be kept in a separate labeled bag. In addition, the manufacturer's instructions regarding use and care of the machine must be followed.