

Factsheet 8

Updated on 4 June 2020

Effective Inhaler Technique

Up to 80% of people with an inhaler are still unable to use their inhaler correctly resulting in poor symptom control and exacerbations. It is important that inhaler technique and adherence is checked before stepping up or stepping down treatment.

GINA (2020) suggest that for effective inhaler technique it is important to:

- Ensure that you as a healthcare professional can demonstrate the correct technique on each inhaler device. You can do this by assessing your technique against a device checklist. An example can be found [here](#)
- Choose the most appropriate device for the person before prescribing. Here you would need to consider if the person has other conditions such as arthritis which affects their ability to use the inhaler correctly. Always prescribe a spacer where appropriate to support the correct use of the device.
- Always check the patient's inhaler technique at every opportunity. Ask the person to demonstrate their inhaler technique and assess this against the device checklist. You may need to check this technique 2 or 3 times if necessary.
- Undertake a physical demonstration of the inhaler technique, ensuring that you can focus on those steps which were demonstrated incorrectly by the patient.

There are also a number of instruments available to test inspiratory flow rate. Ensure you are able to use these training instruments as well as the inhalers. Examples of these devices include:

- In Check device
- 2-Tone Trainer
- MagFlo
- Aerosol Inhalation Monitor



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Updated on 04 June 2020

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During the current pandemic, a safe option is to use video consultations to demonstrate correct inhaler technique. Alternatively, you could signpost people to Asthma UK where there are a number of different resources to support them.

Where can you get more information about devices and checklist?

Further information on inhaler devices and techniques can be found [here](#).

Other resources to support you:

The UK Inhaler Group (UKIG) recognises that many people find inhalation of medicines complicated and difficult leading to sub-optimal use and effect.

It is therefore vital that healthcare professionals have the understanding and skills to support their patients appropriately. UKIG has developed a set of standards and competencies for health and care practitioners to enable them to work with their patients to optimise technique and maximise the benefit of the medication. These can be found [here](#).

References:

1. GINA (2020) ASTHMA MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION. Available on: https://ginasthma.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/04/Main-pocket-guide_2020_04_03-final-wms.pdf
2. PSNC (2016) Available on: http://psnc.org.uk/liverpool-lpc/wpcontent/uploads/sites/117/2016/06/Inhaler_Technique_Checklist.pdf
3. PRIMARY CARE RESPIRATORY SOCIETY Getting the Basics Rights (2016) Available on: https://www.pcrsuk.org/sites/pcrs-uk.org/files/GTBR_InhalerTechnique_Spring2016.pdf