

Asthma medications come in many forms. Some are pills, some syrup, some are inhaled through either an MDI, (Metered Dose Inhaler – liquid medication propelled with a gas), or DPI (Dry Powder Inhaler) and others are liquids used in inhalation machines called nebulizers. Medications are only effective if used correctly. Inhalers make it possible to absorb asthma medications directly into the airways and to stop asthma symptoms quickly. Inhalation is a difficult technique but with practice, anyone can do it correctly.

Various types of Dry Powder Inhalers,  
which are usually controller medications



**DPI or Dry Powder Inhalers:** The medications in these are usually controller or maintenance drugs, which means that some asthma patients, those with mild intermittent asthma for example, may never use them. But patients with more severe asthma will use these on a daily basis. DPI's don't have a propellant gas, so there's no need to prime. A patient inhales the powdered drug through the mouth into the airways. No spacer is needed but children under 4 or patients with severe lung obstruction have difficulty since it requires an ability to generate strong inhaling force to use them. Like any asthma medication, if the right technique isn't followed, there is no benefit to the patient.

### To use a DPI:

1. **activate or "load"** the device according to manufacturer directions. (ask your pharmacist to demonstrate)
2. hold the device so that the medication comes straight out facing your mouth, not down toward your feet
3. breathe out completely. **DO NOT breathe out** into the device
4. **seal your lips** around the mouthpiece
5. **breathe in very hard and very fast**
6. **hold** breath for about 5-10 seconds (count 1001, 1002, etc.)
7. **exhale** away from the mouthpiece
8. **rinse** your mouth with water – don't swallow the water

Using a DPI correctly



Using a different type of DPI  
correctly



### TIPS:

- Dry Powder Inhalers should never be stored in a bathroom or kitchen where there is a lot of humidity as the powder will clog. Protect from exposure to all water and humidity.
- These containers require little or no cleaning. Follow manufacturer directions for use and cleaning.
- Ask your pharmacist if you should take your asthma medications before, after or with food, or if there are certain foods that should be avoided when taking the medications. Your pharmacist can also demonstrate the proper way to use these asthma medication devices.