



Asthma - Reactive Airway Disease

## Home Care Instructions: Hand-Held Nebulizer

**Purpose:** Your physician has ordered a hand-held nebulizer to deliver an aerosolized medication to your lungs. A nebulizer changes liquid medication to a mist so that it can be inhaled into your lungs.

### Equipment Needed:

- Hand-Held Nebulizer
  - Prescribed medication
  - Air compressor
  - Tissues
1. Wash your hands before you handle the nebulizer.
  2. Remove the nebulizer top by turning it to the left.
  3. Place the prescribed amount of medication into nebulizer cup. Unless you are a unit dose vial, be sure to add saline solution to your medication as direction. Use only
  4. Reattach the nebulizer top by turning it to the right. Be sure it is tight.
  5. Attach the mouthpiece to one side of the breathing port (Tee) of the nebulizer.
  6. If you have flexible tubing with your nebulizer, attach it to the other side of the Tee.
  7. Attach one end of the connector tubing to the bottom port of the nebulizer and the other end of the tubing to the air compressor.
  8. Turn on the air compressor. If the nebulizer is working properly, you will see a mist coming from the mouthpiece.
  9. Check your pulse for 1 minute before the treatment and at 5 minute intervals. If your pulse increases more than 20 beats per minute, **STOP** your treatment and contact your physician. If you become lightheaded or dizzy, try resting, then continue the treatment, making sure to exhale at least twice as long as inhaling. If this reoccurs, stop the treatment and contact your Physician; you may be having a reaction to the medicine.
  10. Sit in an upright position. This is the best position in which to take your entire treatment.

11. Place the mouthpiece in your mouth and between your teeth. Seal your lips around the mouthpiece. Take slow, deep breaths. After inhaling, hold your breath for a count of 3 before exhaling. This will promote better disposition of the medication in your lungs. When you inhale, the mist should disappear. Hold the nebulizer upright or it may not work properly. The treatment should last for about 15-20 minutes or until the medication is gone.
12. During the treatment, periodically tap on the sides of the medication cup to knock the medication back into the cup.
13. If you need to cough, stop the treatment and use a tissue. If coughing is prolonged, turn the air compressor off to avoid wasting medication. Restart treatment when coughing stops.
14. When the treatment is done, you should always try to cough to clear your lungs. This is especially important since a buildup of mucus in your lungs can lead to further breathing problems.
15. Discard excess medication. Rinse medication cup parts with warm running water and place them on a paper towel to dry.
16. Note the amount and color of your mucus and if there is any change contact your physician.
17. After the last daily treatment, refer to equipment cleaning handout.