

Tips on Teaching Your Child to Take Asthma Medications Alone

TOOLS TO MANAGE ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES

Eventually, every child needs to learn how to take their asthma medications alone. As a parent you and your physician will be the best judge as to when your child is ready to assume this responsibility. Listen to your child's concerns about taking the medications (all medications have side-effects of some sort; all children react differently to medications. Work with your physician to find the right medications for your child).

- ❖ Learn how to *use a spacer* and inhaler properly so you can properly instruct the child in how to use it. Spacers ensure more medicine is inhaled and not lost in the air
- ❖ *Teach your child one step at a time.* It may take months or longer before your child is ready to take medications alone each time.
- ❖ *Smile. Be patient. Give praise* for trying as well as succeeding.
- ❖ Help your child do it the right way if they make a mistake. Create a reward system when they get it right (stars on a chart kept on the fridge, etc.)
- ❖ When first starting to teach a child, perform each step and explain what you're doing and why
- ❖ As the child takes over, have them do each step as an adult watches
- ❖ *Follow these steps for taking medicines:*
 - Take it on time (a routine scheduled time) or when an attack is coming
 - Get the medicine
 - Measure it if not in an inhaler
 - Use the measured medicine right away
 - Put the medicine container back in the same place each time when done
 - Wash the inhaler and spacer each week
 - Check the medicine every week to see when you need to buy more
- ❖ Once the child can take the medicine alone, ask them to tell you when they have taken it
- ❖ Hint: Some medications leave a bad taste or a dry mouth after using them. Follow manufacturer's instructions, but usually the child can rinse their mouth out with a little water after using the meds. Don't store dry powder inhalers in the bathroom.

The information provided is for reference only and is not a substitute for professional medical care.



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