

How to Use a Nebulizer

A nebulizer is a machine that changes liquid medication into a mist that can be breathed more easily into the lungs. A nebulizer machine connects to a mask that helps your child breathe in the medication. In this handout, you will learn how to use and clean a nebulizer.

Nebulizers are meant to be used only with medications used to treat asthma, breathing or other pulmonary problems. Do not use other medications in the nebulizer unless directed by the care team.

1. Place the air compressor (machine part of the nebulizer) on a sturdy surface. Plug it in.



2. Place the nebulizer medication into the nebulizer cup.



3. Assemble the nebulizer cup and mask or mouthpiece.



4. Connect the tubing to both the air compressor and nebulizer cup.



5. Have your child sit upright in a comfortable chair.



6. Turn on the compressor.



7. Place the mask comfortably over your child's mouth and nose.



Steps 8-10 on the back >>>

8. Have your child take regular breaths through their mouth. If your child feels dizzy or shaky, stop the treatment for 5 minutes before starting again.



9. Continue to use the nebulizer until there is no more mist coming from the mask. This usually takes about 15 minutes.



10. Turn off the air compressor.



How to clean a nebulizer

After each use

1. Remove the tubing from the air compressor. Set it aside. Do not wash or rinse the tubing.
2. Take apart the mask. Rinse the mask and nebulizer cup under warm running water for 30 seconds.
3. Shake off excess water. Let parts air dry on a clean cloth or paper towel.
4. Reassemble the mask, nebulizer cup and tubing. Connect the tubing to the air compressor. Turn on the air compressor for 20-30 seconds. This will dry the nebulizer.
5. Disconnect the nebulizer cup. Store it in a plastic bag or other safe storage container.

Once a week

1. In a large bowl, mix 4 cups of warm water with 1 cup of white vinegar. Soak the mask or mouthpiece and nebulizer cup in this mixture.
2. Rinse the nebulizer parts under warm running water for 1 minute.
3. Shake off excess water. Let parts air dry on a clean cloth or paper towel.
4. Reassemble the mask or mouthpiece, nebulizer cup and tubing. Connect the tubing to the air compressor. Turn on the air compressor for 20-30 seconds. This will dry the nebulizer.
5. Disconnect the nebulizer cup. Store it in a plastic bag or other safe storage container.
6. Clean the surface of the air compressor.

Rev. 4/2019. MassGeneral Hospital for Children and Massachusetts General Hospital do not endorse any of the brands listed on this handout. This handout is intended to provide health information so that you can be better informed. It is not a substitute for medical advice and should not be used to treatment of any medical conditions.

Pediatric Pulmonary Medicine

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