Plymouth Pharmacy Inhaler Use Review – Patient information leaflet¹.

Medication for Asthma or COPD is usually given by inhalation, using a variety of different inhaler devices. It is important that you understand how your inhalers work and that you have your inhaler technique checked regularly by a healthcare professional to ensure you are getting the most from your inhaler.

There are two main types of inhaled medication:

1. Reliever inhalers: A commonly prescribed reliever medication is a salbutamol. Reliever inhalers are usually blue and work quickly by relaxing the muscles surrounding your narrowed airways, allowing your airways to open wider and therefore making it easier for you to breathe. They often work within minutes and last three to five hours. It is important that you keep your reliever inhaler with you at all times as it works fast and therefore is effective at treating chest tightness or wheeze. Some relievers can temporarily increase your heart rate, or give mild muscle shakes; this is normally only when you use your inhaler more than prescribed. If you have asthma and you need your reliever more than twice a week your asthma is not well controlled and you are at higher risk of an asthma attack. You should book an asthma review at your GP surgery to discuss this.

2. Preventer or Maintenance inhalers: Your preventer inhaler works to minimise your daily symptoms, and means you are less likely to need your reliever inhaler. Preventers come in a variety of colours. They work to prevent the amount of inflammation in your airways. This eases the swelling and eases the narrowing of your airways and also reduces the amount of mucus that your lungs produce. Preventer inhalers do not give you immediate effects. The protective effect builds up over time and it can take up to seven days for preventer medicines to work. Once they start working, you may not need to use your reliever inhaler at all. If you stop using the preventer inhaler, the protection it gives your airways will start to reduce, so regular use is important for good symptom control. Some times in addition to inhalers, tablets are prescribed to treat Asthma or COPD such as montelukast and theophylline. Where prescribed these should also be taken regularly. If you have any concerns about how you are using your medication for asthma, please speak to your GP, nurse or pharmacist.

¹ Information leaflet adapted from Understanding your asthma medication leaflet, NEW Devon CCG.  
https://www.newdevonccg.nhs.uk/respiratory/asthma-resources-102212
Inhaler devices: There are a range of different inhalers devices prescribed which fall into three categories.

1. Metered dose inhalers: deliver a specific amount of medicine into your lungs when you press down on the inhaler and inhale slowly and deeply through the mouthpiece. It is advisable to use a spacer device with metered dose inhalers to make it easier to inhale the medicine and reduce side-effects such as a sore mouth and throat. A spacer is a tube that fits onto your inhaler. At the other end of the tube is a mouthpiece to slowly breathe in and out of. A spacer allows you to activate the inhaler then inhale the medicine in two separate steps. This makes taking your inhaler easier as you don’t need to co-ordinate breathing and pressing the puffer at the same time.

2. Breath-actuated metered dose inhalers: deliver a specific amount of medicine into your lungs automatically when you inhale slowly and deeply through the mouthpiece.

3. Dry powder inhalers: deliver the medicine in the form of dry powder as you inhale fast and deeply through the mouthpiece. The dose will often need to be loaded into the mouthpiece prior to inhalation by opening, twisting or adding a capsule.

It is very common to have difficulties with using inhalers with the correct technique, but it is important to make sure you are using your inhaler properly so you’re getting all the benefits from your medicine. You should ask your GP, asthma nurse or pharmacist to check your inhaler technique regularly. Alternatively you can watch videos demonstrating correct inhaler technique here: https://tinyurl.com/plymouthinhalers

**Evaluation:** In order to evaluate the pharmacy inhaler review service it would be very helpful if patients completed an anonymous feedback survey one month after the review in the pharmacy. https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PZMDL3T

(Please complete evaluation questionnaire DD/MM/YY) The following questions would be asked:

1. How satisfied were you with the inhaler review in the pharmacy:
2. Do you believe the inhaler review improved your understanding of your inhalers?
3. 1 month after the inhaler review in the pharmacy do you believe that your respiratory symptoms are:
4. Would you agree to have a more detailed respiratory review in the pharmacy in future for example discussing symptom severity and changes to your prescribed inhalers?
5. If you were smoking at the time of the inhaler review, did this change following the review?
Support in stopping smoking is available in Plymouth from:

Your GP practice – if you want support from your GP practice contact your surgery

Or

Via the Plymouth NHS stop smoking service “oneyouplymouth”
Please see their website for details of services they offer
https://www.oneyouplymouth.co.uk/be-smoke-free/
Alternatively the oneyouplymouth phone number is 01752 437177
Plymouth Pharmacy Inhaler Use Review Appendix 3:

Medication waste patient information

Did you know as much as £5.5 million is wasted each year in Devon on unused medicines?

The same amount could pay for approximately:

- 730 heart bypass operations
- or 1,000 hip replacements
- or 2,235 knee replacements
- or 10,720 cataract operations

You can help us use this NHS money in Devon more wisely:

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<td>Look at your supplies – order only the items that you need.</td>
<td>Listen to the advice from your doctor, nurse or pharmacist and take all medicines as instructed on the label.</td>
<td>Tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if your medicines are not agreeing with you or you have stopped taking them.</td>
<td>Using the counterfoil of the prescription, tick only the medicines you need, and remember “tick in haste – medicines waste.”</td>
<td>Open your bag of medication while at the pharmacy. If you have item(s) not requested, or surplus to your needs for the next month, please return these before leaving.</td>
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