

A nebulizer is a machine that delivers asthma medicine in mist form (wet aerosol). Nebulizers are used mainly by:

- Young children under age 5.
- Patients who have problems using metered-dose inhalers.
- Patients with severe asthma.

A nebulizer has four basic parts: a medicine cup; a mouthpiece attached to a mask or top piece; thin plastic tubing to connect the mask to the machine; and a compressed air machine.

How to Use a Nebulizer

1. Measure the correct amount of normal saline solution using a clean eyedropper and put it into the cup. If your medicine is premixed, go to step 3.
2. Draw up the correct amount of medicine using a clean eyedropper or syringe and put it into the cup with the saline solution.
3. Attach the mouthpiece to the mask and then attach this to the medicine cup or attach the mask to the cup.
4. Seal your lips tightly around the mouthpiece or place the mask on your face.
5. Turn on the air compressor machine.
6. Take slow, deep breaths in through your mouth. Continue until all of the medicine is gone from the cup (about 10 minutes).

Remember to rinse your nebulizer after each use and clean thoroughly once or twice a week.

Proper cleaning of the nebulizer will help prevent germs that cause an infection. Cleaning also prevents the nebulizer from getting clogged and breaking.

It is important to rinse the nebulizer after each use. Here's how:

1. Take the nebulizer apart by removing the tubing and setting it aside. **The tubing should not be washed or rinsed.**
2. Remove the mask or the mouthpiece and top part from the cup. Rinse the mask or mouth-piece and top part, as well as the medicine eyedropper or syringe, in warm running water for 30 seconds.
3. Shake off excess water. Air-dry on a clean cloth or paper towel.

4. Put the mask or the mouthpiece and top part of cup and tubing back together. Connect the pieces to the compressed air machine. Run the machine for 10 to 20 seconds to dry the inside of the pieces.
5. Disconnect the tubing from the compressed air machine. Store the nebulizer pieces in a sealable plastic bag. Cover the compressed air machine.

The nebulizer also needs a thorough cleaning once or twice a week. Here's how:

1. Take the nebulizer apart by removing the tubing and setting it aside. **The tubing should not be washed or rinsed.**
2. Remove the mask or the mouthpiece and top part from the cup. Wash the mask or mouth-piece and top part, as well as the medicine eyedropper or syringe, with dishwashing soap and warm water.
3. Rinse the soap off the nebulizer pieces under a strong stream of warm water for 30 seconds.
4. Soak nebulizer pieces for 30 minutes in a solution that is one part distilled white vinegar and two parts distilled water. Throw out the vinegar-water solution after use; do not reuse it.
5. Rinse the nebulizer parts and the eyedropper or syringe under warm running water for 1 minute. Use distilled or sterile water, if possible.
6. Shake off excess water. Air-dry on a clean cloth or paper towel.
7. Put the mask or the mouthpiece and the top part from the cup and tubing back together. Connect these pieces to the compressed air machine. Run the machine for 10 to 20 seconds to thoroughly dry the inside of the pieces.
8. Disconnect the tubing from the compressed air machine. Store the nebulizer pieces in a plastic bag.
9. Clean the surface of the compressed air machine with a well-wrung, soapy cloth or sponge. You could also use an alcohol or disinfectant wipe. Air dry and cover.

Never put the compressed air machine in water!