



Better Asthma Control for Kids

BACK 1:1 Inhaler Technique Lesson Plan

Topic: Individual inhaler technique

Objective: By the end of this lesson, children will be able to:

- Demonstrate correct inhaler use, with or without a spacer.
- Recognize the difference between a controller inhaler and a rescue inhaler.
- Explain why using the inhaler correctly helps their breathing.

Teaching Aids:

- Demo inhaler
- Spacer devices, with or without mask (if applicable)
- Inhaler Device Assessment Tool (IDAT)
- Medicine traveling to the lungs visual
- Inhaler technique 1 pagers
- Sand timer or countdown method (optional)

Time: 15 – 20 minutes

Suggestions for Use:

- Use at the beginning of the year to teach initial inhaler technique, then revisit periodically to ensure proper technique is maintained.
- Visual tools (matching cards, posters, demonstrations) can be utilized as school nurses or health aides see fit.
- Fit for elementary school-aged students

Procedure:

1. Assess Current Inhaler Technique (2-3 minutes)

- Ask the child if they can show you how they use their inhaler
- Observe without correcting first to identify habits or gaps using the IDAT

2. Explanation (3-5 minutes)

“Your inhaler gives you medicine that helps open your airways so you can breathe more easily. But for it to work right, the medicine must get all the way down into your lungs – not just your mouth.”

- Use the lung diagram to show where the medicine should be traveling



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3. Demonstration of Proper Technique (5-7 minutes)

Using a demo inhaler, show each step slowly and clearly:

- Inhaler
 - Shake inhaler well.
 - Exhale fully.
 - Place mouthpiece in mouth, seal lips tightly.
 - Press the inhaler once and breathe in deeply.
 - Hold breath for about 10 seconds.
 - Breathe out slowly.
 - Wait 1 minute before administering a second puff.

- With Spacer
 - Attach Spacer
 - Shake inhaler well
 - Breathe out gently
 - Place mouthpiece in mouth, seal lips tightly.
 - Press the inhaler once and breathe in gradually (not too fast)
 - Hold breath for about 10 seconds.
 - Breathe out slowly.
 - Wait 1 minute before administering a second puff.

- Spacer with mask additional items
 - Demonstrate how to keep the mask snug over the nose and mouth
 - Show taking slow, normal breaths (5-6 breaths)

4. Guided Practice (5 minutes)

- Allow each child to practice using an empty demo inhaler – you can sanitize and reuse the same inhaler using sanitary wipes
- Gently correct commonly skipped steps as you walk through it (e.g., inhaling too fast, forgetting to exhale first, not holding breath long enough)

Try using supportive language for more forgetful kids:

- “Let’s try slowing that breath down together.”
- “Try breathing out first – that helps make room for the medicine.”
- “Does it feel like the medicine hit the back of your throat?”



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5. Reinforcement & Understanding (5 minutes)

Inhaler Types: show and briefly discuss the two different inhaler types

****** This step is more specific to kiddos that have controller inhalers, though the information can be applicable to any child with asthma.

Controller inhaler:

- Keeps your lungs healthy every day
- Controller is used every day, even when feeling good

Rescue inhaler:

- Helps right away when breathing feels tight
- Used when coughing, wheezing, or short of breath

Questions to ask:

“Which inhaler helps every day?”

“Which one helps when breathing gets hard?”

Why Technique Matters

Ask: “Why do we need to use our inhaler the right way?”

Reinforce: “So the medicine reaches the lungs, not just the mouth.”

Review & Close (2 minutes)

- Ask each child to recount one helpful step they remember
- Show visual differences between controller and rescue inhalers (color, label, purpose)
- If there is additional time leftover ... Have the child arrange inhaler technique flash cards in the correct order

End with encouragement, praise their effort: “You did great - using your inhaler right means your lungs stay strong!”



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