

# Metered-Dose Inhaler: Tracking Doses

It is important to know when to replace your inhaler, so that you don't run out of medicine. The way to do this is to keep track of how many doses (puffs) are left in your inhaler.

## How do I track doses?

Some inhalers have a built-in counter that keeps track of the number of puffs left. All you need to do is to replace the inhaler when the counter shows zero.

If your inhaler does not have a counter, check the label or the written instructions for the number of sprays or puffs in the inhaler. (It may say inhalations or actuations instead of puffs.) Write down the number of puffs.

If you use your inhaler on a schedule every day:

- Write down how many puffs you should take each day.
- Divide the number on the label by the number of puffs you should take each day. (For example, 120 puffs divided by 4 puffs per day = 30 days.) This gives you the number of days your inhaler will last.
- Count off the days on a calendar, then write the date down on the inhaler and on the calendar. You might want to make a note to refill the prescription 5 days before the inhaler runs out.

If you only use your inhaler when you need it:

- Put a piece of tape on the inhaler and make a mark on it each time you use a puff. Make the marks in groups of 5 so you can count them easily.
- Get a refill when 5 to 10 puffs are left.

## What should I avoid?

Do not put an inhaler in water to see if it will float. Some inhalers float when they are full. Putting it in water may damage the canister.

Do not shake the inhaler to see if it is empty. Even after you have used all the medicine, the inhaler may feel as if there are puffs left. This is because there may be some propellant left even though the medicine is gone.

Do not assume that tasting something when you use the inhaler means that there is medicine left. The medicine may have run out and left only the propellant gas.

Do not use an inhaler past the expiration date of the medicine. The medicine may not be strong enough or may breakdown into harmful byproducts over time.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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