

Nebulizer Home Treatment

What is a nebulizer?

A nebulizer is a machine that you use at home. Medicine is mixed with liquid and the machine forms a mist. You will breathe in the mist to help get the medicine in to your lungs.

A nebulizer uses these parts:

- An air compressor, which is a small machine that takes room air and adds enough pressure to change liquid medicine to a mist
- Medicine, which comes pre-mixed, or in bottles that you measure and mix with a special kind of salt water called sterile normal saline
- A nebulizer cup, which is a container with a cap where you put the medicine
- A mouthpiece that attaches to the cup. You breathe through the mouthpiece to get the medicine into your lungs. People who have trouble holding a mouthpiece may wear a mask instead.
- Tubing, which connects the air compressor to the cup holding the medicine to produce the mist

How is the home nebulizer used?

1. Place the compressor on a hard surface. Make sure the filter is free of dust and dirt. If it is dirty, rinse it with water and then dry it. Plug in the compressor. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before beginning a treatment.
2. You may need to prepare the medicine before you add it to the machine. Some medicines come premixed with a special salt water called sterile saline. Other medicines need to have saline added. Your medicine may come with small tubes of saline, or you may need to buy the saline at your pharmacy. Follow the directions that come with your medicine. If you have questions, talk to your healthcare provider.
3. Put the prescribed amount of medicine(s) into the medicine cup with a dropper, a syringe or use the pre-mixed dose.
4. Attach the mouthpiece or mask to the medicine cup.
5. Attach the tubing to the medicine cup. Turn the power on. (You should see a light mist coming from the back of the tube opposite the mouthpiece.) Place the mouthpiece in your mouth or place the face mask over your nose and mouth. Breathe through your mouth until all the medicine is gone.
6. Sit up so that you can take deep breaths. Hold the nebulizer cup in an upright position to help it work best. Gently tap the side of the nebulizer cup from time to time during the treatment to make sure that you get all the medicine. Breathe through your mouth until all the medicine is gone. The treatment is over when all the medicine is gone, no mist comes out, and the nebulizer makes a constant sputtering noise. An average treatment takes 5 to 10 minutes.

Some people cough up mucus after breathing treatments. Note the mucus color and thickness. Normal mucus is usually thin and white or clear. Thick, sticky mucus that is yellow or green may be normal for your condition or it may be a sign of infection. Call your healthcare provider to report a change in the color or thickness of mucus.

If the treatments do not improve your symptoms, call your provider.

How and when should the nebulizer be cleaned?

Follow the directions for your equipment. Make sure you clean it after every treatment. Disinfect according to the directions that come with the nebulizer.

What special instructions should be followed?

Do not use the nebulizer more or less than you are supposed to unless you check with your healthcare provider.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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How to Use a Nebulizer



1. Put medicine into the medicine cup.



2. Attach the mouthpiece or mask to the medicine cup.



3. Attach the medicine cup to the compressor tubing.



4. Place the mouthpiece in your mouth or place the face mask over your nose and mouth. Breathe through your mouth until all of the medicine is gone.

Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you should wear gloves when you use a nebulizer to give medicine to someone else.

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