



## **PATIENT INFORMATION**

# **Nebuliser Guidance for Patients Starting Regular Nebulised Therapy**

### **What is a nebuliser?**

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A nebuliser is a device that turns a liquid containing medication into a fine mist that you can breathe into your lungs. There are two types of nebulisers available:

- a jet nebuliser that uses compressed air to form the mist; and
  - an ultrasonic nebuliser that uses vibrations to form the mist.
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The jet nebuliser is the most common type used. There are three components:

#### ***Compressor:***

This is the power source that compresses the air. This compressed air breaks the liquid medication down into tiny droplets (a mist) that you breathe in.

#### ***Nebuliser chamber:***

This is a small plastic cylinder that you put the liquid medication into. A long, thin tube connects the compressor to the chamber and passes the compressed air through.

#### ***Face mask or mouthpiece:***

This is the device you use to breathe the medication into your lungs. It attaches to the nebuliser chamber.

A face mask fits over your nose and mouth and is usually held in place by a thin elastic strap that goes around the back of your head. You breathe normally to get the medication into your lungs. If you use a mouthpiece, you place your lips around it to form a seal and breathe the medication in.

### **Medication used in Nebulisers:**

Nebulisers are used to relieve breathlessness. The drug that is most commonly used to help with this is Salbutamol; this is sometimes used in combination with another drug called Ipratropium Bromide (Atrovent). You will be advised of what drugs you need to take in the nebuliser. Antibiotics and Saline solutions can also be administered via a nebuliser.

**Your Inhaled medication:**

<b>name</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Device</b>

**How to use your nebuliser:**

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**Prepare the equipment** – place the compressor on a hard, flat surface (like a table or bedside unit) and plug it into the mains. Make sure the thin tube is attached to the compressor and the nebuliser chamber. Holding the chamber upright put the medication into the chamber and attach the face mask or mouthpiece.

**Make sure you're comfortable** – it's best to sit in an upright position as it's easier to get the medication into your lungs. You might find it helpful to prop yourself up with pillows or cushions.

**Starting the treatment** – if you use a face mask, place it over your nose and mouth making sure it's in the right position and put the elastic strap around your head. If you use a mouthpiece, place your lips around it to form a seal. Turn on the compressor.

**Breathing** – breathe normally through your mouth. Try to relax. You can do other things while the nebuliser is on, like watching the television or reading. The treatment will normally take six to 10 minutes to complete.

**During the treatment** – if you need to cough or bring up any phlegm, switch off the compressor if possible while you do so. This prevents you wasting any of the medication. Gently tap the nebuliser chamber occasionally while you're using the nebuliser: this helps to break up large droplets of the liquid medication. A tiny drop of liquid is always left in the bottom of the nebuliser chamber after the treatment has finished.

It's important to keep the compressor off the floor to prevent dust getting inside and to put it on a clean, hard surface when you're using the nebuliser.

**Looking after your equipment:**

It is important to keep the equipment clean and dry.

Each time you use the nebuliser you should

- Disconnect the tubing from the chamber. The tubing should not be washed
- Wash the chamber and mouthpiece /mask in warm soapy water then dry thoroughly
- Ensure the equipment is dry before reassembling
- Unplug the machine at least once a week and clean with a damp cloth.

### **Replacing parts and Servicing:**

The compressor should be serviced regularly (usually every 12 – 24 months). A sticker on your machine will indicate when the servicing is due. You can arrange to have this done by phoning either the Respiratory Nurses on **01803 655147** or the Lung Function Lab on **01803 655120**.

Mask/mouthpiece and tubing should be replaced every 12 months. This is arranged by contacting either of the numbers above.

You will be given some filters which need to be changed every 3 months.

It is your responsibility to contact us when servicing is due or new parts needed. We are not able to provide a delivery service and so items will need to be returned or collected via the Heart & Lung Unit Reception. Alternatively, at request, we can arrange for replacements to be couriered to your GP surgery and similarly you can request the surgery sends back equipment to the Heart & Lung Unit. (It is worth remembering that equipment sent to the surgery may take a couple of days to arrive).

### **Problems with your Nebuliser:**

If there is no mist coming out of the mask make sure you have put the equipment together correctly. Ensure it is also connected properly.

If the machine is not working properly make sure it is connected to the mains, power is switched on and the leads are connected.

If at any time you are worried about any of the equipment please contact the Respiratory Nurses on **01803 655147** or the Lung Function Lab on **01803 655120** who will be happy to help with your enquires.

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