

Treating Asthma

By Kris McFalls



ASTHMA IS ONE of the fastest growing disease states, affecting 17 million Americans. The lung disorder often occurs in patients with a history of chronic infection, brought on by chronic inflammation and/or narrowing of the airways. But, with proactive, consistent care and treatment, patients can control their asthma and lead a very active life.

Tracking the Numbers

Patients who regularly monitor their peak flow numbers have a better chance of keeping their asthma under control and often can spot trouble before it becomes a crisis. They can do this using a peak flow meter, which is a simple device designed to help patients with asthma monitor and track variations in breathing.

Peak flow meters come in two forms: analog and digital. An analog monitor has no bells or whistles, is simple to use and maintain, and levels are recorded manually by the patient. A digital peak flow meter tends to be more accurate and has the capability to record data automatically. Because of its extra features, however, a digital meter costs more than an analog meter.

Less Room for Error

Managing asthma requires the use of inhalers or nebulizers.

Inhalers. Inhalers offer quick, convenient treatment. However, studies show that the majority of patients fail

to use proper techniques when utilizing an inhaler. Many patients struggle with the coordination and timing needed to ensure that the full dose of medication ends up in the lungs instead of in the air. Utilizing a spacer device with a metered inhaler can help maximize the medication dispensed. A spacer, which can be fitted with either a mouthpiece or face mask, is a large air chamber fitted to the opening of the inhaler that slows down the dispensation speed of the medication. Using a spacer with corticosteroid also can help reduce some of the side effects caused by medication residue in the mouth.

Nebulizers. Nebulizers operate by mechanically transforming liquid medication into a fine mist for inhalation. In fact, some adult patients prefer the fine, moist mist associated with a nebulizer instead of an inhaler. In addition, a nebulizer may be best for young children, in particular, because it is the best way to ensure proper dosing.

There are three kinds of nebulizers: jet, mesh and ultrasonic. The most commonly used is the jet nebulizer, which is connected to a compressed air source with tubing. The other end of the tubing is connected to a mouth piece or face mask for inhalation. Jet nebulizers are relatively inexpensive and may be covered by insurance under the durable medical equipment benefit.

Mesh and ultrasonic nebulizers have come about mostly due to patients' desires to lead a more active lifestyle away from home. These devices use high-frequency vibrations to turn medication into mist, and generally, they are battery-operated, hand-held and free of tubes and cords. And, while treatment time is usually shorter than the traditional jet nebulizers, costs are higher and may not be covered by insurance.

Living with Asthma

Asthma is a condition that cannot be cured, but with good communication, consistent record keeping and today's technologies, it can be managed effectively, and patients can expect to lead a full and active life. ■

KRIS MCFALLS is the full-time patient advocate for IG Living magazine.

Directory of Inhalers, Flow Meters and Nebulizers



AeroChamber

AeroChamber Plus is designed to maximize the delivery of metered-dose inhaler medications to patients' lungs and decrease deposition of medication in the mouth

and throat. AeroChamber eliminates the need to coordinate activating the MDI with inhaling the medication. It is available in three mask sizes and without a mask.

www.aerochambervhc.com/patient/default.aspx

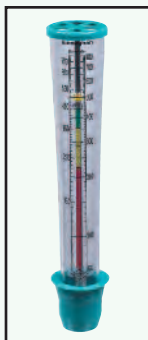


Mabis Healthcare

The CompMist Compressor Nebulizer is a self-contained unit that is designed to be an affordable alternative to bulky compressors of the past. Several key features make it a highly functional system

in home respiratory care, including a convenient and easy-to-carry handle, two compartments for storing tubing, accessories and a power cord, and a built-in nebulizer holder for hands-free medication delivery.

shop.mabisdmi.com/e2wltemMain.aspx?parentID=IT00000371&parentLink=2100000107:3100000433;
(800) 526-4753



Monaghan Medical Corporation

The one-size-fits-all TruZone PFM uses a logarithmic scale, which makes it easy for patients of all ages to determine significant changes in their peak expiratory flow and to record their peak flow readings. ColorZone tapes eliminate the need for mathematical calculations when determining zones and are easy to apply. TruZone PFM is easy to hold in any size

of hand, and is convenient and portable.

[www.monaghanmed.com/products/consumer/truzone-peak-flow-meter-pfm;](http://www.monaghanmed.com/products/consumer/truzone-peak-flow-meter-pfm) (519) 455-7060



nSpire

PiKo® monitors measure peak flow, FEV1, FEV6 and FEV1/FEV6 to provide a solution for asthma and COPD management. Sophisticated features include automatic test quality alerts and elec-

tronic data storage of 96 tests. Data can be reviewed via a single operating button, and all tests can be easily downloaded to the companion PiKoNET software.

[www.nspirehealth.com/default.asp?LINKNAME=PIKO-6_MONITOR;](http://www.nspirehealth.com/default.asp?LINKNAME=PIKO-6_MONITOR) (800) 574-7374

Omron



The Portable Nebulizer with VMT NE-U22V utilizes Vibrating Mesh Technology (VMT) to efficiently deliver solution medications for patients suffering from asthma, COPD or other respiratory conditions. Its small size and carrying case make it easily transported. The nebulizer provides powerful delivery comparable to table-top compressor nebulizer systems to bring effective relief and control of the disease.

[www.omronhealthcare.com/product/1137-201-respiratory-devices-portable-nebulizer-with-v.m.t.-ne-u22v;](http://www.omronhealthcare.com/product/1137-201-respiratory-devices-portable-nebulizer-with-v.m.t.-ne-u22v) (877) 216-1333