

# Pharmacy Spacer Checklist

To help your patients using a pMDI optimise their inhaler technique and maximise the benefit of their medication (as set out in the UKIG's Standards),<sup>1</sup> use this checklist to structure your conversations, depending on the amount of time available to you and your patient.



## If you have 30–60 seconds

- Hand out the Spacer Opinion Questionnaire (SpOQ) for the patient to complete
- Ask if the patient has a spacer
- If NO and, in your clinical opinion, the patient may benefit from a spacer, complete and issue the referral slip for a spacer
- If the patient isn't keen, suggest a review with their clinician
- If YES (the patient has a spacer) – ask if it has been changed in the last 12 months. If the spacer is over 12 months old, complete and issue a referral slip for a spacer



## Conversation starters:

- "Hello my name is..."
- "I can see you're on a metered-dose inhaler, do you have a spacer?"
- "I see from your records that you have a spacer. When was it last changed?"
- "Whilst we are all very familiar with inhalers; inhalers are actually more difficult than most people think to use correctly. Research has shown 9 out of 10 of us healthcare professionals may make a mistake using one of these pMDI devices alone – a spacer can make it easier for the medicine to reach the lungs"<sup>2,3</sup>



## If you have 2–5 minutes

- Hand out the Spacer Opinion Questionnaire (SpOQ) for the patient to complete
- Ask if the patient has a spacer
- If NO and, in your clinical opinion, the patient may benefit from a spacer, complete and issue the referral slip for a spacer
- If the patient isn't keen, suggest a review with their clinician
- If YES (the patient has a spacer) – ask if it has been changed in the last 12 months. If the spacer is over 12 months old, complete and issue a referral slip for a spacer
- Direct the patient to the Asthma UK or British Lung Foundation website for information on spacers:
- <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhalers-medicines-treatments/inhalers-and-spacers/spacers>
- <https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/copd/treatment/medications>
- Direct the patient to useful videos on how to use their inhaler and/or spacer:
  - General: <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhaler-videos/>
  - Specific: (after checking inhaler and spacer compatibility on Right Breathe): [https://www.rightbreathe.com/?s=&device\\_type=spacer](https://www.rightbreathe.com/?s=&device_type=spacer)
- Ask if the patient usually wears a mask
- If the patient is over 5 years of age, ask if they were told why – if there is no obvious reason, refer to a specialist



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- "These reputable websites have short videos on how to use your spacer and clean it. I can text or email the relevant one to you"
- "Do you normally use a mask?"
- "Have you been told why?"



## If you have 10 minutes, carry out a full inhaler technique review

- Hand out the Spacer Opinion Questionnaire (SpOQ) for the patient to complete
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  - General: <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhaler-videos/>
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- Ask if the patient usually wears a mask
- If the patient is over 5 years of age, ask if they were told why – if there is no obvious reason, refer to a specialist
- Carry out a full inhaler technique coaching service (via a face-to-face, video or telephone consultation):
  - Assess their inhaler and spacer technique against 7 steps in the UKIG's Standards:<sup>1</sup> <https://www.respiratoryfutures.org.uk/media/69775/ukig-inhaler-standards-january-2017.pdf>
  - Check that they know how to care for, maintain and store their inhaler and spacer properly<sup>1</sup>
- Discuss inhaler recycling schemes
- Discuss the importance of dose counters where available
- Discuss branded prescribing, where generics are spotted (except SABAs)



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- "Do you normally use a mask?"
- "Have you been told why?"

NMS, New Medicines Service; pMDI, pressurised metered-dose inhaler; PMR, Patient Medication Record; PQS, Pharmacy Quality Scheme; SABA, short-acting beta-2 agonist; UKIG, UK Inhaler Group.

#### References:

1. UK Inhaler Group. Inhaler Standards and Competency Document. Available from: <https://www.respiratoryfutures.org.uk/media/69775/ukig-inhaler-standards-january-2017.pdf>. Last accessed March 2021. 2. Baverstock M, *et al*. P94 Do healthcare professionals have sufficient knowledge of inhaler techniques in order to educate their patients effectively in their use? *Thorax* 2010;65:A117–A118. 3. Lavorini F, *et al*. Targeting drugs to the airways: The role of spacer devices. *Expert Opin Drug Delivery* 2009;6(1):91–102.

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