

Patient information factsheet

The Respiratory Centre – nebuliser loan service

A nebuliser compressor is a machine that delivers drugs to your lungs by driving air through medication in the nebuliser chamber, turning it to a fine mist that can be inhaled through either a mouthpiece or a mask. This factsheet explains how to care for and maintain your nebuliser.

Medication supply and repeat prescriptions

Medication for use in your nebuliser compressor will be prescribed by a hospital doctor and we will ensure you know how and when to take it. Please make sure you keep an adequate supply of your medication. Repeat prescriptions can be obtained from your GP (family doctor).

Side effects

Salbutamol may cause a fine muscle tremor and/or palpitations (heartbeats that suddenly become more noticeable). Ipratropium bromide (Atrovent) can affect the eyes, so a mouthpiece (device through which to inhale the mist) would be advised. Please discuss any side effects with your GP or the Respiratory Centre if you are concerned.

How to use the nebuliser

- Fit the mains plug to the power supply and connect to the nebuliser.
- Connect one end of the tubing to the outlet nozzle on your nebuliser machine.
- Connect the other side of the tubing to the nebuliser chamber.
- Twist the top off the medication and squeeze it into the nebuliser chamber (maximum 10 ml).
- Do not tip the chamber once the medication has been inserted, as it will spill out.
- Attach the mouthpiece or mask to the nebuliser chamber.
- Press the switch so the machine begins to work.

A fine mist will be produced that can be breathed in using slow, deep, gentle, relaxed breathing. **Do not try to breathe quickly.** Switch the machine off when the misting has stopped and the medicine has disappeared from the chamber.

Storage

The machine should be stored and used in a clean, dry, dust- and smoke- free area at room temperature.

Do not block the intake grills to the side of the device and keep electrical leads away from heated surfaces.

Position the machine on a clean surface. This should not be on carpet, as fibres and dust can be drawn into the unit when in use. Keep unit away from water.

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Servicing

New nebulisers don't need to be serviced for three years. After this, they should be serviced on an annual basis.

If you have a loaned machine from the Respiratory Centre, you can contact us on **023 8120 4325** to arrange servicing. If you have purchased your own machine, please contact your supplier.

Cleaning your nebuliser and equipment

It is important to keep your nebuliser clean and dry to prevent germs from growing in damp equipment and to maintain good working order.

Nebulisers should not be shared between friends or relatives.

The mask should be wiped clean with a damp cloth.

The chamber and mouthpiece – a small amount of drug remains in the medication chamber after treatment. If not cleaned, it can crystallise and block the nebuliser jets. This should be emptied and washed after every treatment with clean, hot soapy water (dishwashing liquid) and then rinsed under hot running water to clean the fine jet holes. Shake off any excess water and allow to dry fully before reassembling. Once a week, **long-term** chambers should be placed in boiling water, which has two drops of dishwashing liquid added, for six to ten minutes. Care should be taken not to lose the internal piece of the chamber, as the nebuliser will not work without this.

Short-term nebuliser chambers (dark blue in colour) can be used for one month. Long-term chambers (light blue colour) last one year. If treatment is to continue after this period, you should obtain new equipment.

Tubing and nebuliser compressor – should not be immersed in water but wiped with a damp cloth along with the nebuliser unit (when disconnected from the mains) on a weekly basis.

Jet holes – after every use, disconnect the nebuliser from the tubing and turn the compressor on for a short period of time to clear any moisture from the tubing.

Filters – the air inlet filter should be changed at least every three months to maintain the effectiveness of the compressor.

Returns

Nebulisers should be returned to:

The Respiratory Centre
Southampton General Hospital
Tremona Road
Southampton
SO16 6YD

Contact us

Respiratory Centre telephone: **023 8120 4325** (leave a message and we will return your call). Please contact us if you are having problems returning the machine after the loan period has ended.

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