

Appendix 6 - Guide for parents starting a child on a nebulised therapy

Helping a young child get used to nebulisers

Getting used to the nebuliser a staged approach

You will be given your mask and nebulising equipment at your appointment.

Sometimes it can take children some time to get used to wearing the mask and having a nebuliser. If your child is struggling the following tips can help them with this.

Stage 1

Play with the mask on a doll or a toy, or on parents/carers. Once happy playing, you can then put the mask to your child's face. Don't forget you can play with the mask at bath time as well.



Stage 2

Look at the nebuliser together and play with the parts. Turn it on and play with it for no more than five minutes. (Don't put any medicine in at this stage)



Stage 3

Choose a DVD to watch and 'nebulise' a doll, teddy or favourite toy.



Stage 4

Using the same DVD, fully assemble the nebuliser and play with the mask on your child's face. Start with 10 seconds and build up.

Give lots of encouragement and rewards such as stickers or sweets if appropriate.

Stage 5

As above but use 0.9% saline in the nebuliser. Use a timer and see if your child can manage 30 seconds 3-4 times in a row. If so move onto the next stage.

Stage 6

Your child should be ready to take the nebulised medication. Keep giving lots of encouragement and praise.

Your child might find it helpful to have a 5-minute warning before you start. Use the same DVD and then switch it off afterwards ready for the next time.



Remember, we want you and your child to be as comfortable and relaxed as possible so that the medication can work really well.

If your child is under 5 the homecare physiotherapists will ring you during this time but please contact the team if you feel you need extra support.

If things go wrong

If at any time during the 'stages' your child becomes distressed, remove the nebuliser without comment. It is important not to 'reward' the child by giving them a cuddle, or getting cross with them.

Just walk calmly away and say 'that's ok, we will try again next time'. You may find it helpful to go back a stage.

Contact one of the people on the Useful Contacts list overleaf if you want to discuss things further.

Top Tips from other parents

Best time

Think about when you can best fit the nebuliser into your everyday routine. Try and pick a time when you will not be interrupted and are generally relaxed without time pressure.

Discussion

Is your child old enough to be prepared verbally e.g. "The doctors have asked you to take a new medicine to help with your cough. It is a special mist which you have to breathe in. You do it twice a day like cleaning your teeth."

Consistency

Have a consistent approach. Same time, same place, same DVD etc.

Rewards

With younger children (pre-school to 7-year olds) it can be really helpful to have prepared small immediate treats such as a sticker or sweet. What other younger (and older) patients seem to love is having a special jar/pot/bag used only to reward co-operation with the nebuliser. This can either be full of small treats (chocolate buttons/stickers/other items such as Moshi Monsters or Match Attack cards.) Alternatively, it could be a lucky dip of instant privileges - for example watching Peppa Pig or reading a book with a grown up. Older children may like the lucky dip approach or can be offered more planned rewards if preferred, such as staying up later or having a friend to play.

Keep Calm

Keeping calm yourself will help your child to learn quickly to get used to using the nebuliser. Even if underneath you do not feel calm (we do understand that your child being prescribed nebulised medications may be difficult for you for a number of reasons) try to 'act' calm. Think about your movements, tone of voice and what you are saying.

Get ready

Take time to get used to the equipment. Make sure you have everything ready before you start. Give a 5-minute warning.

Distraction

Have other means of distraction handy as well as a DVD e.g. books and toys.

FAQs...

Can I give the nebuliser to my child when they are asleep?

There needs to be exceptional circumstances when this may work best but there are reasons why it may not be the most helpful thing to do. Please do not do it because your child becomes distressed when they have the nebuliser while awake - their fears are likely to be heightened by being woken by the nebuliser. If this is the only way you are able to ensure that your child co-operates with the nebuliser, please do contact one of the people on the Useful Contacts list below for some suggestions about how to help with this.

There seems to be some medicine left in the nebuliser when it's finished – is this right?

There will always be a tiny bit of medicine left over. You will know it is finished when the mist stops.

How do I wash the equipment?

Keeping your nebuliser clean is vitally important. Full written details will be given by your physiotherapist.

If despite following all these guidelines your child is finding the nebuliser difficult please let your homecare team know and we will work with you to make it successful.

Useful Contacts

Senior Ward/Clinic Physiotherapist

Nicola Collins 0207 352 8121 Bleep 7304

Paediatric Pharmacy Team

Phone 0207 352 8121 ext 4375 or Bleeps 7425, 7410

Homecare Team – Physiotherapists

Emma Dixon 07970 269452

Nicky Murray 07791 584749

Homecare Team – Nursing

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