

Asthma inhalers and the environment

All inhalers can affect the environment but some can add to global warming more than others.

How do inhalers affect the environment?

Metered dose inhalers (MDIs) shown in image 1, and breath-actuated inhalers (BAIs) shown in image 2 are safe for humans but contain a propellant (gas) that can contribute to global warming.

There will be lower carbon MDI options available by 2025. Speak to your pharmacist to learn more.

Image 1: MDI with a spacer

Spacer device
MDI/Puffer
inhaler



Image 2: Easi-breathe inhaler

Easi-breathe is a type of breath-actuated inhaler



Dry powder inhalers (DPIs, image 3) do not contain a propellant. Most children aged 10 years and over may be able to use them. Always refer to the manufacturer's leaflet and check with your usual healthcare professional if you are unsure how to use them.

Image 3: Dry powder inhalers



What can you do to help?

Good asthma control = good for you + good for the environment

1

Using your preventer inhaler regularly, with good technique, helps control your asthma. This means you will need less of the blue reliever/emergency inhaler

- Using more preventer and less blue reliever means less inhalers are used overall which is better for the planet
- Children under the age of 10 years in most cases should continue to use an MDI with a spacer
- For children aged 10 years and older it may be possible to use a DPI
- Speak to your trained asthma nurse, pharmacist or GP to see if a DPI might suit you better and to know more about good inhaler technique. You can always change back if you choose to.

2

Reduce waste and know when your inhaler is empty

You or your parent/carer can:

- Ask your asthma clinician if they can find an inhaler with a dose counter so you know when it's almost empty and needs to be reordered
- Set up a repeat prescription for your preventer inhaler and only order inhalers when you need them
- Check the expiry date of all your medicines regularly
- Check with the pharmacist that you are using your inhaler correctly.

3

Return used or empty inhalers to the local community pharmacy

Return all used and unused inhalers no longer in use to a pharmacy for safe disposal. It is important that inhalers are NOT put into household waste, especially MDIs as propellants will be released into the environment (greenhouse gases).

Find more information by visiting this website:

www.recyclenow.com/what-to-do-with/inhalers-0