

Nebulizer Systems On the Go

How portable devices can fit into your schedule and asthma management plan

Today’s on-the-go lifestyle often makes it difficult for parents to fit in their children’s asthma treatments. But newer, more portable nebulizer systems can deliver the proper medication almost anywhere. Now you can make sure your kids get to the game on time and get their asthma in check too.

One for the road

Portable nebulizer systems offer the simplicity of traditional nebulizers with the convenience of metered dose inhalers for those who can’t use them. While portable systems boast a more compact size, lighter weight, and quieter operation, they don’t sacrifice treatment effectiveness. The length of treatment time and efficiency is similar to a traditional tabletop nebulizer — typically it takes less than 10 minutes to deliver a 3 ml medication dose.

Most systems come with a reusable nebulizer that can deliver the same commonly prescribed aerosol medications as traditional models do, including suspensions like budesonide. However, it’s still important to talk with your health care provider about what type of medications and formulations are right for your portable nebulizer system.

Some of the newest systems are smaller than a deck of cards, which makes them easy to fit into a handbag, backpack, or gym bag. Because they can run on battery power, you don’t need to be near an electrical outlet to deliver a treatment. Some use standard disposable batteries, and most also include the option of using a rechargeable lithium ion battery. Generally, it recharges fully in as little as six hours, using either a traditional AC wall outlet or DC adapter for the car.

Other optional accessories include pediatric and adult masks, which can help to minimize medication loss. Choose a mask soft and flexible enough to fit snugly on the face but large enough to cover the mouth and nose. Some masks are available in fun designs to encourage children’s compliance with treatment.



Safe and sparkly

Comprised of just a few parts, most portable nebulizer systems are user-friendly and easy to maintain. While these systems are durable, you’ll still need to keep up with some routine maintenance to keep them running effectively. Always read the manufacturer’s instructions included with the system for specific guidelines.

Check the air filter on a routine basis, and replace if it gets wet, clogs, or becomes discolored. Most systems come with a few replacement filters. You’ll also need to replace the reusable nebulizer about every six months. Replace immediately if you see any damage, wear, or tear. Health insurance usually covers replacements, but you should call your insurance provider to find out your coverage terms.

After each time you deliver a treatment, clean the nebulizer with warm, soapy water. Or if it’s dishwasher-safe, you could place it in the top rack. You’ll need to decontaminate the nebulizer weekly by placing it in boiling water for about 10 minutes. Once a month, wipe the outside of the compressor with a clean, damp cloth. Don’t allow any liquid to get into the power receptacle or battery compartment to avoid damage.

With proper use and a little bit of maintenance, portable nebulizer systems can help children gain control of their asthma and stay active too. ■

Information provided by Timothy Op’t Holt, EdD, RRT, AE-C, FAARC, and adapted from the Allergy and Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Your doctor or therapist has given you this patient education handout to further explain or remind you about an issue related to your health. It is a general guide only. If you have specific questions, discuss them with your health care provider.
