

What is a nebuliser?

A nebuliser is an electrical machine which blows air through a chamber containing liquid medicine, forming a mist which can then be inhaled.

What is the benefit of a nebuliser?

These machines are useful when patients are unwell, for example with a chest infection, and unable to use their usual handheld inhalers.

Are there any risks involved in using a nebuliser?

- Nebulisers should only be used on the advice of a nurse or doctor
- The higher doses of medication delivered through it can cause some side effects, such as tremor, palpitations, muscle cramps and dry mouth
- Always refer to the drug information leaflet for side-effects for your medicines.

Are there any alternatives to using a nebuliser?

Hand held inhalers and spacers have been shown to be just as effective as a nebuliser in controlling routine symptoms.

Once recovered from your chest infection, your nurse or doctor will assess the use of hand held inhalers if needed. The nebuliser can then be returned to the Community Equipment Service.

How do I use the nebuliser?

- Place the prescribed amount of medicine into the nebuliser chamber
- Connect the nebuliser to the tubing and attach to the machine. Attach the mouthpiece / mask to the chamber and switch on the machine
- If using the mouthpiece seal your lips around it and breathe through your mouth, not your nose. If using a mask place it over your mouth and nose
- Do not talk while using the nebuliser
- Keep nebuliser upright while using
- When you no longer see a mist, which will be after 10-15 minutes, the treatment is finished.

Continued overleaf...

Originator: Community Nursing Service

Caring for your Nebuliser

The equipment needs to be kept clean to avoid the increased risk of a chest infection.

After each use you should:

- disconnect tubing, do not wash
- disconnect chamber and facemask / mouthpiece and wash in warm soapy water, rinse under warm running water and leave to dry
- once dry reassemble and run for a few minutes to air dry completely
- wipe the machine with a damp cloth weekly. Unplug the machine before you do this.

What should I do if the nebuliser is not working properly?

It is important to remember that a nebuliser delivers high doses of the same medicine in your inhalers. In an emergency you can use your blue inhaler and spacer by increasing the numbers of puffs you usually take. Your nurse or doctor should explain this to you.

If you think your machine has broken please contact:

Community Equipment Store Monday – Friday 8.30-4.30

Telephone number: 0151 334 9139 or contact your Community Nurse.

What should I do if I think using the machine doesn't help my breathing?

If you continue to feel your symptoms are not improving or remain poorly controlled after using the nebuliser contact the Community Nurses, Community Matron or the GP Out Of Hours Service.

If you feel your situation has become an emergency dial 999.