

NCHS Use of Inhalers During COVID-19 Pandemic
09/23/20

Procedures that can aerosolized the SARS-CoV-2 virus is not recommended¹ in the school setting. These procedures include nebulizer treatments, suctioning (oral and tracheal) and high flow oxygen.

The CDC recommends asthma treatments with spacers over nebulizer treatments during this COVID-19 pandemic. Metered dose inhalers with spacers or face masks are not considered to be aerosol generating.²

A metered-dose inhaler with a spacer or valved holding chamber should be used in the school setting. Valve chambers and spacers allow the medication to reach the lungs easier³
The use of an inhaler can trigger a child's cough.

Students that self carry should be allowed to self administer their medication as long as they remain over 6 feet away from others.⁴ This is related to having to unmask for the administration and the potential to trigger a cough. They can step outside the classroom to administer the medication or come to the health office if they need assistance (well zone area).

Students with exercise induced asthma should administer their inhaler 15-30 minutes prior physical activity. Students must have access to their quick relief inhaler during activity to manage symptoms.

Children with well controlled asthma should be able to comfortably wear a cloth face mask without affecting their oxygen levels. It is recommended that students with severe or poorly controlled asthma remain at home

¹ COVID-19 EMS Patient Screening & Training. (2020, July 6). Retrieved September 09, 2020, from <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/novel-coronavirus/ems-911-resources/covid-19-ems-patient-screening-training-presentation.pdf>

² COVID-19: K-12 Schools and Childcare Programs. (2020, June 03). Retrieved September 22, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html>

³ American Lung Association. (2019, April). *Using and Inhaler with a Valved holding Chamber*.
<https://www.lung.org/getmedia/8794aba5-e4e5-480f-b14a-b84a39379c5c/using-an-inhaler-with-a.pdf.pdf>

⁴ American Lung Association. (2020, August 14). *Back to School with Asthma During COVID-19 | American Lung Association*.
<https://www.lung.org/blog/back-to-school-with-asthma-during-covid>