

Nebulisers

A nebuliser is a device that changes liquid medication into an aerosol, or mist, so that it can be inhaled. Nebulisers are used to deliver medication directly to the lungs, with less side-effects. This is particularly useful in cystic fibrosis (CF) as more medication can be delivered where it is needed most.

Why Do I Need to Use a Nebuliser?

You may have been asked to start taking a medication that is only available in nebulised form or is more effective when nebulised as it is going straight to the lungs. Your CF team will let you know the dosage and frequency of your medication.

What Do I Need to Know Before I Start Using a Nebuliser?

Make sure your equipment is clean and dry before adding medication to the chamber. You must use a different medication chamber or handset for each medication you are nebulising.

Never mix medications in your medication chambers unless you have been told to do so by your CF team. Label your medication chamber so you know which one to use.

Nebulisers can be used with a mask or a mouthpiece, so discuss your options with your CF team to make sure you have the right equipment.



When using a mouthpiece, make sure you completely seal your lips. You may need to add in a nose peg to ensure you are not breathing through your nose. Babies and young children will need to use a mask until they learn to use a mouthpiece.

What Are the Different Types of Nebulisers?

There are many different types of nebulisers but not all of them are suitable for CF medications.

Some nebulisers need mains power to work, others can be used with batteries, some are small, portable and quiet and others are loud and powerful.

Your CF team will advise you on the best nebuliser for you so talk to them about your options.

Which Medications Can Be Nebulised?

Some of the medications that may be nebulised include:

- **Bronchodilators**- to relax and open the airways.
- **Antibiotics**- to treat bacterial infection in the lungs.
- **Anti-inflammatories**- to reduce inflammation in the lungs.
- **Mucolytics**- to thin the mucus so that it is easier to clear.
- **Antifungals**- to reduce fungal growth in the lungs.

Cleaning Your Nebuliser

It is very important that you read the instructions provided with your device for specific cleaning information. In general, the medication chamber, or handset, should be cleaned every time you use it. This can be done by washing in warm soapy water, rinsing in running water and leaving to air dry. Equipment must be completely dry before reusing or storing.

Your handset should be sterilised weekly in boiling water for five minutes or you can use a steam steriliser.

CFWA Support

Cystic Fibrosis WA (CFWA) have some nebulisers and nebuliser accessories available for people with CF. Equipment available at any given time varies, as it is dependent on grant funding. Nebulisers are provided in consultation with the CF teams at the tertiary hospitals.

Some nebulisers may be available from Perth Children's Hospital or Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital or you can access a [CFWA subsidy](#) if purchasing your own.

CFWA can provide support for young children who are using nebulisers. Our [Home Care Workers](#) may be able to visit you at home to help administer nebulised medications. If you are interested in this service or would like more information, please contact us at CFWA.

Useful Resources

- [How to Clean your Nebuliser video \(CF Buzz\)](#)
- [Nebuliser Systems for Drug Delivery in Cystic Fibrosis article](#)
- [Airway Clearance Factsheets \(CFWA\)](#)

Last reviewed December 2020.

Cystic Fibrosis WA
The Niche
11 Aberdare Road
Nedlands WA 6009

T: +61 8 6224 4100
E: info@cfwa.org.au

Disclaimer: This publication is for general education and information purposes. Contact a qualified healthcare professional for any medical advice needed.

© Cystic Fibrosis Western Australia 2020