

Questions to ask your respiratory patients – medication and healthy lifestyles



Questions for a pharmacist to ask	Key messages for patients
Importance of good inhaler technique	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are you getting on with your inhalers? • How often do you take the inhaler(s) you have? • Can you show me how you take your inhaler? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to take your inhalers as prescribed • Importance of getting the technique right – pharmacist should demonstrate correct inhaler technique and review patient technique if corrections are needed
Use of a spacer with metred dose inhaler (MDI)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have an aerosol inhaler do you have a spacer device? • If so, has anyone explained how to use this and why it was given to you? • Do you use your spacer and if not why? Consider changing their spacer if necessary? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important that they know how to use their spacer (demonstrate to the patient if necessary) • Explain that a spacer can improve the amount of drug reaching the lungs, which can improve symptom control • Explain how to clean their spacer
Correct use of short acting beta agonists (SABAs) for rescue medication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often are you using your relief (blue) inhaler? • Do you understand what to do when your blue inhaler is not working as well as it usually does? • Discuss the use of a self-management plan and check that they have access to one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important that patient understands relief inhalers should be used as needed and not on a regular basis • Remind patients that if they are using their relief treatment regularly or more frequently than usual then they should see their GP or nurse for a review of their condition
High usage of salbutamol inhalers (relievers)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often do you need to use your salbutamol inhaler? • Do you have a preventer (brown/orange/red) inhaler? • How often do you take (or forget to take) your preventer inhaler? • Be aware that patients with COPD may not require preventer treatment if they do not have exacerbations and may be managed safely on dual long-acting bronchodilators alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important that patients understand the difference between relief and preventer treatment • Discuss any side effect issues and ensure patient is rinsing and gargling after taking their preventer inhaler

Questions for a pharmacist to ask	Key messages for patients
How to reduce stock piling of inhalers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you able to get your prescription regularly? • Explore any concerns regarding ability to access prescriptions which may lead to stock piling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make patients aware that they can set up repeat prescriptions with their pharmacist to help avoid running out • Note: most inhalers will last at least 1 month (or contain a dose counter)
Positive lifestyle messages – tobacco reduction	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you smoke and if so have you thought about getting some help to stop? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the importance of stopping smoking, the impact that smoking has on disease progression and inability of inhaled treatment to work effectively • Offer referral to smoking cessation services
Positive lifestyle messages – exercise	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you often feel breathless, which stops you from doing the things that you want to do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the importance of exercise and that staying active prevents the muscles from becoming weaker (which can worsen their health) • Reaffirm that exercise improves energy, mood and helps to relieve stress. Note: patients can use their blue inhaler before exercising to lessen a chance of an attack • Explain what pulmonary rehabilitation is and how it can help people with COPD. Encourage the patient to speak to their GP about being referred to a programme
Positive lifestyle messages – healthy diet	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you noticed any changes in your weight, either weight gain or loss? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that it's important to eat a balanced diet and maintain a healthy weight • If you become overweight this can make your breathing worse, and if you lose weight this may affect your health • If you believe the patient has a problem then encourage them to speak to their GP and be referred to a dietician

Patient health information covering diseases such as asthma, COPD and pneumonia, as well as information to support healthy lifestyles such as stopping smoking, exercise and diet are all available to order or downloaded online at blf.org.uk/hcp

Additionally we provide a range of social support activities such as our Breathe Easy patient support groups, singing groups and BLF Active exercise classes. Further information on these can be found on our website.