

Dear Patient,

Green inhalers

We are all aware of the need to reduce carbon emissions to help the environment. The NHS is no different and there are many changes happening from government through to local hospitals and GP surgeries. Portsdown Group Practice is proud of its efforts so far:

<https://www.portsdowngrouppractice.co.uk/sustainability>

One way in which the NHS can reduce its impact on the environment is in reducing the carbon footprint of inhalers. Over the next few years we will see a major change in prescribing so that people are on inhalers that do least harm to the environment. Inhalers are an essential part of treating people's lung conditions. It is important that we reduce the overall carbon footprint of asthma, COPD and other respiratory conditions by:

- Keeping your lung condition well controlled is the most important thing
- Get the most benefit from your inhalers by taking them correctly + using a spacer device if you are on an metered-dose inhaler (see below)
- Preventer inhalers work best when they are taken every day, even when you are well. They are working quietly in the background to calm down your disease.
- Return any used inhalers to your pharmacy for safe disposal (this prevents the leakage of damaging gases that happens when inhalers are put in the household rubbish)

The problem with inhalers

One big issue that needs addressing is that metered dose inhalers (MDIs)(most 'gas' inhalers) use propellants that act as greenhouse gases. Dry powder inhalers (DPIs) and Respimat inhalers do not contain these gases so are better for the environment. **Overall, the NHS needs to prescribe less MDI inhalers. In the UK we prescribe many more MDI inhalers than most other countries.**

Branch Surgeries

Cosham Park House Surgery
Cosham Park House Cosham
Park Avenue
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PO6 3BG

Crookhorn Surgery
Crookhorn Lane
Waterlooville
PO7 5XP

Heyward Road Surgery
3 Heyward Road
Southsea
PO4 0DY

Paulsgrove Surgery
194 Allaway Avenue
Paulsgrove
PO6 4HJ

Somerstown Health Centre
Tyseley Road
Southsea
PO5 4EZ

Website: www.portsdowngrouppractice.co.uk

Email: Portsdown.group@nhs.net

Dry powder inhalers contain the same types of drugs as MDIs. They suit and work for most people really well. However, it is not just as easy as swapping one inhaler to another. We need to make sure:

- Any change is okay for that patient and their disease
- The medicines in the new inhaler are at the right level for each patient at the right dose
- The device is able to be used correctly

Not everyone needs to change inhalers and for some people it would not be the right thing to do to change something that is working well for them and their condition. We also know there are patients who are stable with their inhalers but would like to switch to an inhaler that is better for the environment.

Your salbutamol might change (a little)

Salbutamol is the most commonly prescribed inhaler. Salbutamol is made by many different brands such as Ventolin, Salamol, Airomir, Easyhaler and more. Ventolin has a carbon footprint 50 times higher than the lowest level inhaler and 3 times more than similar salbutamol inhalers.

Because of this we will be switching prescriptions of Ventolin to other versions of salbutamol. The medicine will be the same, the dose will be the same and you will still be able to use it with a spacer device if you have one. This is a change from a high-carbon MDI to a lower-carbon MDI. Keep using your current inhaler until it is finished.

We will also be keeping an eye out for people who are needing a lot of salbutamol as this is a sign that more needs to be done to help with their lung disease.

At your next review we will speak to you about your other inhalers

For people's routine / preventer inhalers we will only make changes

- where it is clinically okay to do
- once we have explained the change to you and shown you how to use the new

inhaler

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Extra reading

NICE have produced a [decision aid](#) to help choose different types of inhaler
Asthma+Lung UK host some brilliant [inhaler videos](#) so you can check if you are using your inhaler in the best way
Asthma+Lung UK have a [webpage](#) and a [blog](#) talking about inhaler switches in more detail.

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