Nebulizers

What is a nebulizer?
A nebulizer is a machine that uses forced air to turn medicine into a fine mist. A person then breathes the mist into their lungs. The medicine opens the breathing tubes in the lungs so the person can breathe better.

A nebulizer has four parts:
• A compressed air machine
• A cup to hold the medicine
• A thin plastic tube from the compressed air machine to the medicine’s cup
• A mouthpiece or face mask to help breathe in the mist

Why do I need a nebulizer?
The nebulizer helps your child receive as much of the medicine as possible. For some people and some medicines, a nebulizer is the best way to receive inhaled medicine.

How do I use a nebulizer?
Your healthcare provider will give you specific instructions for your nebulizer. Here are some general instructions:
1. Fill the medicine cup with the amount of medicine prescribed.
2. Connect the tubing of the machine.
3. Have your child sit upright so they can take deep breaths.
4. While you hold the medicine cup upright, put the mouthpiece in your child’s mouth. If your child is too young for the mouthpiece, place the mask on your child’s face.
5. Turn the machine on.
6. Have your child breathe deeply and slowly through their mouth.
7. If the medicine begins to sputter before it is used up, tap the medicine cup.

How can I help my child adjust to a nebulizer with a mask?
Let your child play with the mask and practice. Have your child place the mask over their face, or on your face or a doll’s. When appropriate, encourage your child to hold the mask during the treatment.

If your child does not hold still while using the mask, you can give them a small incentive (like a treat). You can also distract them with music, a story or a toy. If this does not work, you may need to gently hold your child while they receive their treatment.