

## **USING INHALERS IN HORSES**

It is very important that these instructions are followed exactly if you are to get effective levels of medication into your horse's lungs. Multiple scientific studies have shown that each of the steps below has a marked influence on the effectiveness of inhalers.



1. Warm the inhaler to body temperature before use, for example in your pocket
2. Shake the inhaler well for 30 seconds
3. Remove the cap from the inhaler
4. Waste the first puff - as the propellant settles there will not be the full dose of the drug in this puff
5. Attach the inhaler to the spacer chamber and keep the inhaler vertical
6. Ensure the mask is firmly in position over the nostril with an airtight seal
7. Watch the breathing pattern for a few breaths and actuate (puff) the inhaler once, just before or immediately after the horse begins to breathe in
8. Allow a full inward breath to take in all the drug
9. If possible occlude the other nostril as the horse is breathing in for 5-10 seconds
10. Wait at least 30 secs before delivering the next puff (actuation) and shake again before hand

Look at the inhaler packet to check how many actuations (puffs) are contained, often 200. Mark off what you have used each time as the inhaler will continue to puff and deliver the propellant gas once all the drug has run out.

Keep your mask and spacer clean by washing and drying by hand with mild soap and water. Rinsing the spacer with a dilute solution of washing powder and air-drying without rinsing reduces static and may improve drug delivery.

## **INHALER TRAINING**

Most horses can be trained to use an inhaler with a spacer chamber attached. It is important to get your horse accustomed to the equipment and trained to accept inhaler treatment using positive reinforcement techniques so that medication can be given safely and not wasted. Build up each stage of the training in steps and reward the horse for the correct behaviour. Initially you must teach the horse to accept the mask touching his nose, then train him to keep it there while the inhaler is used. The diagrams on the next page show how, but above all you must make the experience a positive one and reward the correct behaviour copiously.

There are also lots of useful links and videos online to help you, including this one using clicker training.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvPE5Za0Uec>



Step 1. Ted learns to touch his nose on the spacer. Build up the time gradually so the horse learns to hold his nose in place for longer each time.

Step 2. Mimicking the noise of the inhaler with an air duster spray. Start a distance away where the horse is confident and move closer gradually. For more nervous horses you can start by gently blowing through the spacer.



Step 3. Using a spent inhaler to accustom Ted to the clicking noise before starting giving medications via the spacer.

**If you have any concerns or questions please do contact us at the surgery on 01282 868 748.**