

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF INHALERS



## INHALER SWITCH INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS IN CHIPPENHAM, CORSHAM AND BOX PCN



One Ventolin inhaler produces the same amount of carbon emissions as driving 175 miles in a small petrol car. MDIs contain powerful greenhouse gases in the spray, that are 1000-3000 times more powerful than carbon dioxide and constitute a quarter of general practice's prescribing footprint as well as contributing to global warming.

In October 2020, the NHS became the world's first health service to commit to reaching carbon net zero, in response to the profound and growing threat to health posed by climate change.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/a-net-zero-nhs/>

Your carbon footprint is a measure of the impact your activities have on the environment. The inhalers you use can have a big impact on your carbon footprint.

The NHS contributes 4-5% of the UK's carbon emissions (for comparison 5.9% of our carbon footprint relates to air travel).

Prescribing low-carbon alternative dry-powder inhalers (DPIs), instead of "sprays" metered-dose inhalers (MDIs), has enormous potential to reduce general practice's carbon footprint.

FOR A GREENER **NHS**



**The best way of reducing the environmental impact of inhalers is for your asthma to be well controlled.**

If your asthma is well controlled, you should rarely need to use your blue inhaler and you should only need one of these a year.

We also know that if people are using more than three blue reliever inhalers a year, they are more likely to have serious flare ups of their asthma that may require steroid tablets or admission to hospital. If you are using your blue inhaler more than three times a week due to asthma symptoms, or needing more than three blue inhalers a year, then you should book an appointment with your asthma nurse to review your treatment.

Dry powder inhalers (DPI) do not use propellants and so have substantially lower impact on climate change. For most patients, dry powder inhalers are a very effective alternative to metered dose inhalers (MDI).

To proactively reduce the MDI inhalers in our area (PCN), we have to make a concerted effort to switch to DPI inhalers. This may mean that one, or some of your inhalers, are converted to dry power inhalers the next time you order your repeat medications.

## Switching Your Inhaler

As a PCN we will be switching MDI inhalers to DPI where possible and we need your support.

These switches have been agreed with the doctors and asthma nurses in all surgeries and should not have a negative impact on your asthma control.

We very much appreciate your understanding and realise changing inhalers can be challenging. Please ask your pharmacist to show you how to use the inhaler if you are unsure or click on the link below.

These inhalers may not suit everyone and if you have any issues please do discuss with your pharmacist or asthma nurse.

If you have switched previously, we have worked hard to ensure you don't get put back on an inhaler you didn't get on with, we do apologise if this happens. We are switching hundreds of patients and do appreciate your patience. Please simply contact your surgery and explain if there are issues.

Thank you

[Click here for inhaler technique videos](#)