



**ASTHMA
AUSTRALIA**



**Lung
Foundation
Australia**

Ventolin nebulas 2.5mg/2.5mL temporary supply outage Information for consumers



The product manufacturer of Ventolin (salbutamol), GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), is anticipating a temporary supply outage of Ventolin nebulas 2.5mg/2.5mL.

What is this medicine used for?

Ventolin nebulas are sometimes used to treat asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). The medicine in Ventolin nebulas relaxes the muscles around the airways, which allows air to move in and out of the lungs more easily. The Ventolin nebulas is put into a machine called a nebuliser. The machine makes the medicine into a fine mist that you breathe in through a face mask or mouthpiece.

Why is there an outage?

- The manufacturer of Ventolin nebulas says there has been more demand for this medicine than usual. Until they can keep up with the extra demand, the medicine will be in short supply or out of stock.
- Only the 2.5mg/2.5mL strength Ventolin nebulas are in short supply.
- The temporary short supply outage does not apply to any other Ventolin inhalers/puffers, or the other strength of Ventolin nebulas (5.0mg/2.5mL).

How long will the shortage last?

The supply outage is expected to last from Wednesday 15 November 2023 to Thursday 1 August 2024. Many pharmacies will have no stock of the medicine from mid-end November 2023. If you are unable to fill your script, you should make an appointment with your doctor as soon as possible to have your asthma or COPD treatment plan reassessed.

For up-to-date information speak to your doctor or pharmacist or visit the [Therapeutic Goods Administration \(TGA\) Medicines Shortage Reports Database](#).

What are some alternative options?

If you use Ventolin nebulers, talk with your doctor about what to do while there are limited amounts. Your doctor may consider the following:



1. Try other forms of Ventolin (via a puffer and spacer)

Your doctor might suggest switching from Ventolin nebulers to a Ventolin puffer and spacer (plus mask if required e.g. children under 4 years old or some older people).

Research shows that using a puffer and spacer is just as effective as a nebuliser for treating symptoms of asthma and COPD, even for flare-ups. Using a puffer and spacer is also faster and easier.

Nebulisers can also scatter infectious virus particles up to several metres, and so, could spread infectious respiratory viruses like influenza and COVID-19.

If you have used Ventolin via a nebuliser before, you might feel like it relieves your symptoms more than a puffer and spacer. This is because of the amount of the medicine in the nebuliser, rather than how it is taken.

When you are talking about switching to a Ventolin puffer and spacer:

- Ask your doctor for an updated **asthma** or **COPD** Action Plan. This should include the number of puffs of Ventolin you should take via a spacer to relieve your symptoms. It should also include your maintenance (regular, long-term) medicine
- Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse to show you how to use a puffer and spacer and ask them to check your technique
- Follow the manufacturers' instructions for cleaning your **puffer and spacer**.



2. Continue with Ventolin nebulers but reduce prescription quantities and repeats

If using Ventolin via a puffer and spacer is not an option, your doctor may reduce how many Ventolin nebulers or repeats you can get from the pharmacy.



3. Review your asthma or COPD medicines

Your doctor will review your maintenance (regular, long-term) medicines to make sure you're using the most effective one/s for your condition. The goal of using regular maintenance medicine is to reduce the need for nebulised Ventolin.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- The TGA publishes information about **national medicines shortages**. Information for consumers can be found on the **TGA website**.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns about your medicines and to check your inhaler and spacer technique.
- Learn how to use a spacer by watching our **demonstration video**.
- If you have asthma, learn **Asthma First Aid**.

To learn more about asthma and COPD visit:

Lung Foundation Australia
1800 654 301
lungfoundation.com.au

Asthma Australia
1800 ASTHMA (1800 278 462)
asthma.org.au