



Green Horizons 2 - one of a series of fact sheets

ASTHMA/COPD INHALERS

Find a
greener inhaler
to suit you



By Dr Catherine Salkield

Did you know that keeping your asthma well controlled is also a way of reducing the carbon footprint for the NHS!

Standard inhalers or “puffers” use a gas to propel the medicine into the user’s lungs. Unfortunately, these gases are powerful greenhouse gases. In fact, their use makes up 3% of the entire carbon footprint of the NHS, and the single largest contributor of the carbon footprint for medicines by a huge 13%. This also is made worse if we dispose of them in landfill as the left-over gases slowly leak into the environment.

There are huge differences in inhaler types and their effectiveness for your asthma as well as the effect on the carbon footprint.

One standard blue inhaler is equivalent to 175 miles emissions in a car, compared to only 4 miles equivalent for a mist or a dry powder alternative.

Uncontrolled asthma uses more ‘reliever’ inhalers which only last 1-2 hours in your system. If you are needing to use them a lot then you may not be well controlled and could be at higher risk of a more severe asthma attack.

The NHS have been looking at asthma and COPD control and are starting to have the honest conversation with patients. We can reduce the impact on the environment hugely if we have regular checks that asthma is being well controlled by the lowest impact ‘preventer’ inhalers for each individual and reducing the use of ‘relievers’.

Action plan

1 Keep well controlled on 'preventers' not 'relievers' - and have regular asthma checks if you have symptoms.

2 Speak to your asthma nurse about the lowest impact inhalers that will work for you as an individual- they should be able to share this information with you at your next check appointment.

3 Dispose of your inhalers by returning them to your pharmacy - **do not put them in landfill.**

Resources for further information

Adults prescribing advice

<https://s40639.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Reducing-Carbon-Footprint-of-Inhaler-Prescribing-v3.3.2.pdf>

and advice for children and young people

<https://s40639.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/CS55917-NHSE-Guide-for-HCP-on-reducing-carbon-footprint-of-inhaler-prescribing-for-CYP-final.pdf>

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Our group reports to the PCC. We have a page on the Church website www.eatonsocon.org/creation-care, and a group on the Church Facebook page. We would be pleased to hear your views and suggestions - please email to creationcare@eatonsocon.org or leave a voicemail message on 01480 352154 (Church office).