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Ventolin inhalers to get dose counters

6 Aug 2020



Ventolin (salbutamol) metered dose inhalers will come with dose counters, manufacturer GSK has announced.

The new inhalers will be phased in over the next four to six months and are listed on the PBS from 1 August, 2020.

The dose counter allows patients to view the number of doses remaining in their inhalers and will enable better monitoring of medication usage and ensure adequate supply when needed, the company says.

The full transition will be complete by the end of 2020 after existing stocks of Ventolin inhalers held by pharmacies are used up.

Professor Adam Jaffe, a paediatric respiratory consultant at Sydney Children's Hospital and University of NSW said dose counters had been on preventer medications for asthma and COPD for many years and had helped patients manage their medication.

"Previously people would shake the puffer or weigh it, however, these are very inaccurate methods to assess if there was any [salbutamol] in the puffer.

"Given that Ventolin is a lifesaving medication, the addition of the dose counter means that patients can ensure they have a puffer available with remaining doses if needed in an asthma flare up," he said.