



Complete the Cycle

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# Breathe new life into your old inhalers

**Information  
leaflet**

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Date of preparation: March 2018  
UK/RET/0012/18



**73**  
**million**  
**respiratory**  
**inhalers are prescribed**  
**in the UK**  
**every year<sup>1</sup>**

## **What is complete the cycle?**

COMPLETE THE CYCLE from GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is the first UK-wide recycling and recovery scheme for the inhalers used to treat conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (or COPD). In the same way that you may recycle your household rubbish, the scheme allows you to breathe new life into your old inhalers by safely and responsibly recycling them via your local participating pharmacy. It is the first scheme of its kind in Europe, and through taking part you can reduce the harmful environmental impact associated with the landfill disposal of respiratory inhalers.

## **How the scheme works**

It couldn't be easier to breathe new life into your old inhalers. Simply return your old or used inhaler to your participating pharmacy, and we'll do the rest!

You can really make a difference by returning your old or used inhalers to a participating pharmacy.

**58%**

**of people claim to put their old inhalers in their domestic waste bin at home<sup>2</sup>**



## **Why do I need to recycle my old inhalers?**

While most local authorities can recycle certain plastics, some inhaler components contain plastics which are not readily recycled in council schemes.

Consequently, if GSK did not offer this scheme, it is likely that inhaler devices would either end up in landfills or in some parts of the country, sent for incineration with energy recovery. When disposed in landfills, old inhalers pose a risk to the environment not just in material waste but also in greenhouse gas emissions, should the gas canisters become pierced or crushed and the propellant released.

COMPLETE THE CYCLE facilitates the safe and responsible recycling and recovery of all inhalers. Through the scheme, the plastics and aluminium parts of the inhaler are recycled and used in new products such as plastic bottles, car parts or garden furniture. Non-recyclable inhaler waste will be converted into electricity or heat using a process called 'waste to energy' whereby energy is created through the incineration of waste.

**Over 1.2 million inhalers have been recycled and recovered. This has saved CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**

**equivalent to taking**

**5,199 cars off UK roads<sup>3</sup>**



# What kind of inhalers can be recycled?

Through COMPLETE THE CYCLE, you can safely and responsibly recycle and recover the following inhalers:

- **Metered dose inhaler** (MDI) – delivers a specific amount of medication to the lungs in a fine mist
- **Dry Powder Inhaler** (DPI) – delivers medication in the form of dry powder
- Please ask your participating pharmacy for further details

COMPLETE THE CYCLE is run by GSK and supported by participating pharmacies. It is just one part of GSK's long-term commitment to be carbon neutral by 2050.

## References

1. GSK Data on file. UK/RET/0081/17(1).
2. GSK Data on file. UK/OTH/0025/17(1)a.
3. GSK Data on file. UK/RET/0010/18.

For more details about COMPLETE THE CYCLE or to find your nearest participating pharmacy, please visit:

[www.completethecycle.eu](http://www.completethecycle.eu)