

Asthma Medicines

Although there is no cure for asthma, medicines are the **best** way to control and treat asthma. Medicines taken the right way help control asthma with few side effects. Understanding how each medicine works helps keep asthma in good control.

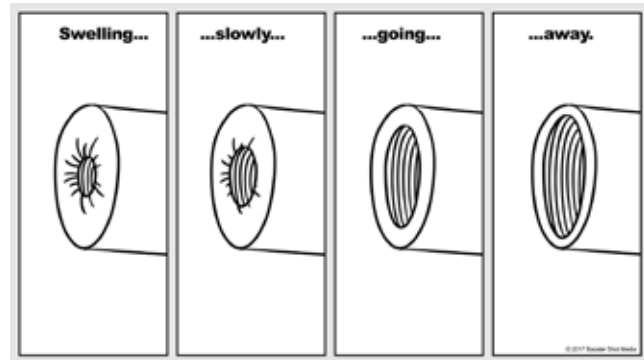
There are two types of asthma medicines. Each type works a different way. The types are called: **Daily Control Medicine** and **Quick Relief (Rescue) Medicine**

Daily Control Medicine (Preventative/Controller)

Daily control medicine helps to decrease the swelling in the airway and keep the airway open. This makes it easier to breathe.

Important facts about daily control medicine:

- Use this medicine every day even if there are not asthma symptoms.
- When these medicines are used every day, the symptoms of asthma will decrease. The chances of having an asthma attack will also decrease.
- These medicines do not work quickly. It may take a few days to a few weeks for any effects to be noticed.
- When these medicines are taken every day, a quick relief medicine should not be needed more than two times a week. There may be times when quick



Daily control medicine makes it easier to breathe by decreasing swelling

relief medicine may be needed more than twice a week such as illness or exercise.

There are three main kinds of daily control medicine:

1. Inhaled corticosteroids
2. Combination medicine
3. Leukotriene modifiers

1. Inhaled Corticosteroids (Common names are Flovent, Qvar, or Budesonide)

- This medicine comes as an inhaler or a liquid for a nebulizer.
- This medicine decreases swelling and mucous in the airway

Special instructions

- Do not stop taking this medicine without talking to your doctor.
- Can cause irritation of the mouth and throat. Rinse your mouth after using the medicine to prevent this.

2. Combination medicine (Corticosteroids and Long Acting Beta Agonists) (Common names are Advair, Dulera)

- This medicine comes as an inhaler.
- The corticosteroid works to decrease and prevent both swelling and mucous in the airway. The long-acting beta agonist is used to open the airways in the lungs by relaxing the muscles around the airways.

Special instructions

- Do not increase or stop this medicine without talking to your doctor.
- Can cause irritation of the mouth and throat. Rinse your mouth after using the medicine to prevent this.

3. Leukotriene Modifiers (Common names are Montelukast or Accolate)

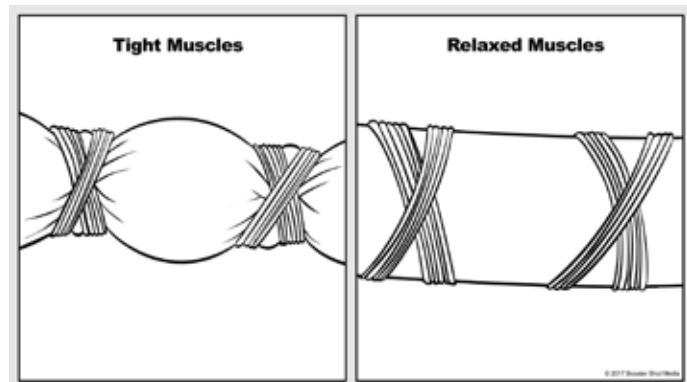
- This medicine comes as a pill that you chew or swallow.
- It blocks the immune system from causing airway swelling.
- It also helps with swelling and mucous in the nose caused by allergies.

Special instructions

- Works best if taken before bed.

Quick Relief (Rescue) Medicine- (albuterol and levalbuterol)

- Quick relief medicine help relax the muscles that are squeezing around the airways. This helps make it easier to breathe.
- Use this medicine right away when asthma symptoms start.
- This medicine begins to work very quickly. Asthma symptoms should be better in 5-10 minutes after taking the medicine.
- The medicine will work in the body for up to 4 hours.
- Quick relief medicine should only be taken for asthma symptoms or before activities. If this medicine is used too often it can be dangerous.



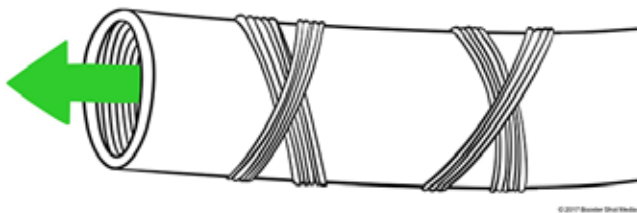
Quick relief (rescue) medicine relaxes muscles around the airway

Special Instructions

- Some people have restlessness, nervousness, shaking hands, fast or pounding heart beat when they take quick relief medicines. The use of a spacer can decrease these symptoms.

Steroid Medicines by Mouth:

- This medicine comes as a liquid, melting tablet or pill.
- When an asthma attack happens, extra medicine may be needed to help with the swelling and mucous.
- This type of medicine should not be used very often. It should only be used when asthma symptoms are very bad.
- When steroids are used right away, the swelling should stop quickly. They take 6-8 hours to start working.



With the right medicines, air moves freely and breathing is easy

- Sometimes the doctor will give instructions to slowly decrease the medicine dose. This means taking less and less medicine every day until it is stopped. Doctors call this a steroid taper.
- These are not the kind of steroids that people use to build muscle.

Special Instructions:

- Some people get more energy when this medicine is taken, have trouble settling down, or trouble sleeping. Some children have more behavioral problems with this medicine. Take this medicine earlier in the day to prevent sleep problems.
- If steroids are needed more than one time a year, asthma is not in good control. See a doctor or asthma specialist because extra medicines may be needed.

Common Questions About Asthma Medicines

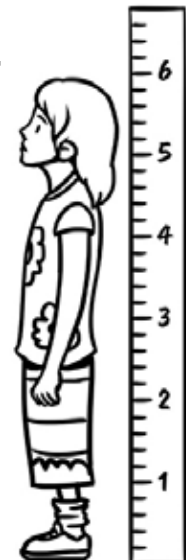
Why does each medicine have two names?

Most asthma medicines have two names: a brand name and drug name. A good example of these is Proair® (brand name) and albuterol (drug name).

It is very common for doctors to talk about both the brand names and drug names. This can be confusing, so ask the doctor to mention the other name of the medicine if there are any questions.

What changes in growth can happen from controller asthma medicines?

Inhaled asthma controllers can slow growth in children at any dose. Although this side-effect may seem concerning, the usual height difference is only ~1 centimeter, or around 1/3rd of an inch.



Are there any natural medicines that help asthma?

There are no natural medicines that have been found to work for asthma. Talk to your doctor if you are using any natural medicines.

Should cough medicines be used for asthma?

No. Cough medicines do not control asthma and should not be used. Instead, use asthma quick relief medicine to treat a cough.