

Asthma Medications Simplified

Asthma medications take many forms: they're found as pills, syrups, as inhalers, as liquids used in a nebulizer, (a machine which direct the flow of medicine more intensely). Asthma medications work in different ways to help control asthma and, for many patients, more than one type is usually required. Because everyone's asthma is different, physicians will prescribe different medications at different times to different persons. Asthma is classified by severity. Someone with mild asthma may only need to take medications for a short time when they have shown symptoms and have a flare-up. Patients with severe asthma may need to use several medications daily. Over time, your doctor may change your medications, which is why it's important to visit your physician regularly. There are **two types of medications**:

- † **Long-term control medicine** works to keep breathing easy and asthma symptoms and flares from starting. They work by preventing airway swelling, de-sensitizing the airways and helping prevent attacks. These control meds also help before sports or in bad weather to keep symptoms at bay and flare-ups from occurring. The most effective long-term medications for most patients are *corticosteroids*. These are not the same as sport steroids, however.
- † **Quick relief medicines** are used when the patient feels a flare-up starting or when the peak flow meter reading is low (in the yellow or red zone). They work fast and stop flares by opening up the airways and relaxing the muscles around the airways. NOTE: Some patients use quick-relief or rescue medicines too much. If used daily to stop flare-ups or more than 4 times a day to halt flares, this is dangerous. The airways will actually become more swollen and may cause a serious asthma flare. Long term control medication should be used instead of relying on rescue meds.

Asthma Control Medications can be divided into 5 categories and include these meds:

<u>Steroidal</u>	<u>Leukotriene Modifier</u>	<u>Long-Acting Beta-Agonist</u>	<u>Non-Steroidal</u>	<u>Dual Component</u>
AeroBid	Singulair	Serevent	Intal	Advair Discus
AeroBid-M		Serevent Discus	Cromolyn	
Azmacort		Foradil	Tilade	
Qvar				
Beclovent				
Flovent				
Pulmacort Turbuhaler				
Pulmicort Respules				

Asthma Quick Relief medications can be divided into 3 categories and include these meds:

<u>Short-Acting Beta Agonist</u>	<u>Methylxanthine</u>	<u>Anticholinergic</u>
Alupent	Theo-Dur	Combivent
Maxair Pirbuterol		Atrovent
Proventil Albuterol		
Ventolin Albuterol		
Xopenex		

The Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America, Texas Chapter
Ft. Worth, TX 76123

817-297-3132 * 888-933-2232

info@aafatexas.org * www.aafatexas.org

Information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for responsible professional care to diagnose and treat specific symptoms and illness. Any reference to products and procedures is not an endorsement. AAFA-TX and all parties associated with this paper will not be held responsible for any action taken by readers as a result of this paper.