

INHALED CORTICOSTEROIDS

LONG-TERM CONTROL ASTHMA MEDICINE

When a person has asthma, the airways are very sensitive to irritants and allergens. The inside walls of the airways tend to become swollen and covered with mucus, partially blocking the flow of air into and out of the lungs. During an asthma episode, the swelling becomes worse and more mucus is produced, making it very difficult to breathe. Inhaled corticosteroids control the swelling and mucus production that make the airways more sensitive and prevent asthma episodes.

Inhaled corticosteroids are the most effective long term control asthma medicines. They are the key to good asthma control for many people with asthma. It may take several weeks before they take full effect. You should continue taking them even when you feel better and have no asthma symptoms.

Inhaled corticosteroids do not stop an asthma episode once it has started and do not relieve symptoms.

How are Inhaled Corticosteroids taken?

Inhaled corticosteroids are taken using an inhaler (or pump). Those brands that come in a metered dose inhaler should be used with a spacer. A spacer is a plastic tube or bag you attach to your pump to help get the medicine to your airways. The few brands that come in a dry powder inhaler do not require a spacer. There is also one brand that can be used with a nebulizer machine.

Inhaled medicines go right to the lungs and cause fewer side effects than medicine taken by mouth, like pills or liquid.

Side Effects:

Inhaled corticosteroids may cause an infection in the mouth, may make you cough, or become hoarse, or may cause a headache.

Use a spacer or holding chamber to avoid these problems, unless you are using a dry powder inhaler. Rinsing your mouth after inhaling the medicine will also help to prevent mouth infections.

SOME BRAND NAMES OF INHALED CORTICOSTEROIDS

(Generic names in parentheses)

Aerobid
(Flunisolide)

Azmacort
(Triamcinolone acetonide)

Beclovent
(Beclomethasone dipropionate)

Flovent
(Fluticasone propionate)

Pulmicort
(Budesonide)

QVAR
(Beclomethasone dipropionate)

Vanceril
(Beclomethasone dipropionate)

COMBINATION MEDICATION

Advair Diskus*
(fluticasone propionate and salmeterol xinafoate)

* *Approved for children over 12 years old.*

Advair contains two active components. In addition to the corticosteroid, fluticasone propionate, it also contains a long-acting bronchodilator, salmeterol xinafoate.

Corticosteroids are **not** the same as anabolic steroids that some people use to build muscles. Corticosteroids occur naturally in the body as substances that fight infection and inflammation. Anabolic steroids build up muscle tissues and are often used by athletes who want to develop bigger muscles. These are two different kinds of drugs.

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INFORMATION
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