



## Asthma Medications

There are many asthma medications. Some are taken orally, some are taken by hand-held inhaler and mask, and some are taken by a nebulizer. Asthma medications have two basic actions: one is to relieve the symptoms, and the second is to control and prevent attacks from happening. Here are some details.

### Rescue or Reliever Medications

- Albuterol
- Ventolin (albuterol)
- Proventil (albuterol)
- ProAir (albuterol)
- Xopenex (levabuterol)

These medications are used during an asthma attack to *relieve symptoms*. They are called “beta agonists.” These medicines work to quickly relax the muscles that line the airways. The airways open up, allowing the child to breathe more easily. These medications act fast, often working within 10 minutes. The effect typically lasts for four hours. Rescue medications can be given by inhaler or by a nebulizer.

### Controller Medications

#### *Inhaled steroids*

- Flovent (fluticasone)
- Pulmicort (budesonide)
- Asmanex (mometasone)
- QVAR (beclomethasone)

Inhaled steroids are used to prevent asthma attacks and to help control and improve ongoing symptoms. Just as with rescue medications, there are many brands -- the most common ones listed above. They work by reducing airway inflammation. This helps to keep the airways open, so the child may breathe more

easily. These medications typically take a couple days to start working, and about a week before they have their full effect. That is why they must be used consistently. Inhaled steroids are given by inhaler or by nebulizer.

#### *Leukotriene Inhibitors*

- Singulair (montelukast)

Leukotriene inhibitors such as Singulair are also used to prevent asthma attacks and control asthma symptoms. They work to prevent the release of substances that cause inflammation. Leukotriene inhibitors are available as tablets, including chewables.

#### *Combination medications*

- Advair (fluticasone/salmeterol)
- Symbicort (budesonide/formoterol)
- Dulera (mometasone/formoterol)

For patients who need additional treatment to achieve control of their asthma, sometimes we may prescribe a combination medication such as Advair, which includes a LABA (long-acting beta agonist) and an inhaled steroid.

### Emergency Medications

#### *Oral Steroids*

If your child has a more severe asthma attack, oral steroids may be used for short periods of time (5-10 days). They work to quickly reduce airway inflammation to allow your child to breathe more easily. Oral steroids don't reduce growth or have any major side effects when they are used this way.

By keeping your child's asthma under good control, our goal is to prevent the need for oral steroids, and to avoid emergency room visits altogether! We will follow your child in the office regularly and help you maintain ideal control.

*We pledge not only to care for you, but to care about you.*