

THINGS TO ASK & TELL YOUR PHARMACIST



THINGS TO ASK YOUR PHARMACIST



- 1 What do I need to know about this asthma medication?
 - How will it help me?
 - When do I take it?
 - How do I take it?
 - Are there side effects?
 - How long will it last/when will I need a replacement?
 - Do other medications affect my asthma?
- 2 Should I be taking any other medications for my asthma (e.g. A preventer if you have not already been prescribed one)?
- 3 Can you show me how to use my asthma medication?
- 4 Do I need a spacer?
- 5 Should I be taking hay fever treatment and how often as I cough, wheeze and sneeze?

THINGS TO TELL YOUR PHARMACIST



- 1 If you are coughing, wheezing, breathless or have a tight chest – day or night
- 2 If you struggle to keep up with normal activity
- 3 If you need to use your reliever medication more than two days per week
- 4 If you cough, wheeze or sneeze or have symptoms such as itchy nose or eyes, runny or blocked nose, throat clearing or snoring
- 5 If you struggle to keep up with normal activity
- 6 If you have ever been affected by thunderstorm asthma
- 7 If you are using any other medications or complementary therapies

If any of these points describe your asthma – see your doctor as soon as possible.

KNOW YOUR MEDICATIONS

There is a wide range of asthma medications. It is important to understand the role medications play in helping asthma and keeping well.

The most common are shown here:

RELIEVER

(SHORT-ACTING BRONCHODILATORS)



| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| What they do | Relax tight airway muscles to relieve symptoms |
| How long they take to work | Very quickly |
| When to take them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When you have symptoms - Emergency - Sometimes before exercise if prescribed |
| Helpful to know | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry it with you always - If you are using your reliever more than 2 days per week (not including before exercise) as this indicates your asthma is not well controlled, see your doctor for an asthma review - Many relievers now come with dose counters to enable you to keep track of how much medicine is left in your device - Ensure you discuss device use technique for these new inhalers with your pharmacist |



DUAL PURPOSE RELIEVER

(BUDESONIDE/FORMOTEROL USED AS-NEEDED)



| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| What they do | Relieves symptoms and reduces risk of serious flare-ups by treating inflamed airways |
| How long they take to work | Relieves symptoms very quickly |
| When to take them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When you have symptoms as prescribed - Emergency - Sometimes before exercise if prescribed |
| Helpful to know | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry it with you always - If you are using your reliever most days per week (not including before exercise) as this indicates your asthma is not well controlled, see your doctor for an asthma review |

PREVENTER

(INHALED CORTICOSTEROIDS)



| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| What they do | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce airway swelling to improve asthma control, reduce your risk of flare-ups, improve lung function and improve quality of life - Reduce mucus |
| How long they take to work | May take a few weeks of consistent use to show improvement |
| When to take them | Every day as prescribed |
| Helpful to know | A preventer is the key to keeping well with asthma, but don't forget that a reliever needs to be carried with you always in case of breakthrough symptoms |

COMBINATION PREVENTER

(INHALED CORTICOSTEROIDS AND LONG-ACTING BRONCHODILATORS IN FIXED DOSE)



| | |
|--|--|
| <p>What they do</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combination medication which delivers a fixed dose of medication - Preventer (reduces airway swelling and reduces mucus) plus one or two long-acting relievers (to relax tight airway muscles) which improves asthma control, reduces risk of flare-ups, improves lung function and quality of life |
| <p>How long they take to work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preventers may take a few weeks of consistent use to show improvement - Long-acting bronchodilators are either fast or slow acting - Some medicines contain a long-acting reliever that works within minutes. Others take up to 30 minutes to start working |
| <p>When to take them</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combination preventers must be taken every day to be effective - Low dose DuoResp, Fostair and Symbicort can sometimes be used as a preventer and a reliever, under strict conditions. This is called 'Maintenance and Reliever Therapy', and means you use the same device to relieve symptoms if they occur |
| <p>Helpful to know</p> | <p>Prescribed for people who have asthma symptoms despite simple, regular preventer use</p> |

OTHER PREVENTERS

(NON-STEROIDAL PREVENTERS)



| | |
|--|--|
| <p>What they do</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce airway swelling - Reduce mucus - Reduce sensitivity to allergens therefore improves asthma control and reduces risk of flare-ups |
| <p>How long they take to work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Montelukast starts to work within a day but can take days to weeks of consistent use to show improvement - Inhaled Intal or Intal Forte may take days to weeks to show improvement |
| <p>When to take them</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Montelukast should be taken once every day - Intal or Intal Forte may be taken 3-4 times every day |
| <p>Helpful to know</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-steroidal preventers are less effective than inhaled corticosteroid preventers - If taking your non-steroidal preventer regularly and still experiencing asthma symptoms speak to your doctor |





MAKE THE CALL 1800 ASTHMA

Call our free information and support service to speak with an Asthma Educator about your asthma.

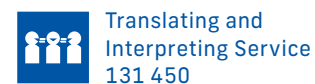
Call **1800 ASTHMA** (1800 278 462) or visit asthma.org.au/1800-asthma



This brochure, developed by Asthma Australia, provides basic information about things to ask and tell your pharmacist.

Other Asthma Australia resources:

- Asthma Basic Facts
- Asthma Medications & Devices
- Things to Ask & Tell your Doctor



All Asthma Australia information is consistent with the National Asthma Council's, The Australian Asthma Handbook (2020).

Asthma Australia information does not replace professional medical advice. People should ask their doctor any questions about diagnosis and treatment.

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ASTHMA FIRST AID

Blue/Grey Reliever

Airomir, Asmol, Ventolin or Zempreon and Bricanyl

Blue/grey reliever medication is unlikely to harm, even if the person does not have asthma



DIAL TRIPLE ZERO (000) FOR AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY IF THE PERSON:

- is not breathing
- suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- is unsure if it is asthma
- **has a known allergy to food, insects or medication and has SUDDEN BREATHING DIFFICULTY, GIVE ADRENALINE AUTOINJECTOR FIRST (if available), even if there are no skin changes, then use a reliever**

1



SIT THE PERSON UPRIGHT

- Be **calm** and reassuring
- **Do not leave** them alone

2



GIVE 4 SEPARATE PUFFS OF RELIEVER PUFFER

- **Shake** puffer
- Put **1 puff** into spacer
- Take **4 breaths** from spacer
 - Repeat until **4 puffs** have been taken



If using **Bricanyl**, give 2 separate inhalations (5 years or older)

If you don't have a spacer handy in an emergency, take **1 puff** as you take **1 slow, deep breath** and hold breath for as long as comfortable. **Repeat** until all puffs are given

3



WAIT 4 MINUTES

- If breathing does not return to normal, give **4 more separate puffs** of reliever as above



Bricanyl: Give 1 more inhalation

IF BREATHING DOES NOT RETURN TO NORMAL

4



DIAL TRIPLE ZERO (000)

- Say **'ambulance'** and that someone is having an asthma attack
- Keep giving **4 separate puffs every 4 minutes** until emergency assistance arrives



Bricanyl: Give 1 more inhalation **every 4 minutes** until emergency assistance arrives