

Medications for the Treatment of Asthma

(The following is an excerpt from American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology [2007]. [You've been referred to an asthma specialist...here's what to expect.](#))

Today there are many excellent medications for treating asthma. Some are used to prevent asthma symptoms and attacks. Others relieve symptoms when they occur. Some of the most common medications are listed below.

Quick-Relief Medications

Medications in this category are meant to be used to treat an asthma episode or attack – to relieve symptoms and open airways quickly. They also may be used to pre-treat to prevent attacks, such as before exercise.

Short-Acting Beta-Agonists	Anti-Inflammatory Drugs	Anticholinergics
<p>These medications are bronchodilators and are used to relax the muscles and open airways. Short-acting beta-agonists work quickly to increase airflow and are the treatment of choice for acute asthma symptoms and attacks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albuterol • Alupent® • Combivent®** • Maxair™ Autohaler™ • ProAir® HFA • Proventil® (albuterol) • Proventil® HFA (albuterol) • Ventolin® HFA (albuterol) • Xopenex® • Xopenex® HFA 	<p>These medications are used to prevent or reduce inflammation and swelling in the airways.</p> <p>Oral Corticosteroids (also may be used for long-term control)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medrol® • Orapred® • Orapred ODT™ • Pediapred® • Prednisone • Prelone® 	<p>These medications may be used as an alternative or in addition to other therapies. Generally, they are not the first treatment of choice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atrovent® (Note: does not block exercise-induced asthma) • Atrovent® HFA (Note: does not block exercise-induced asthma) • Combivent®**

**Combination medication of Atrovent and Albuterol

Long-Term Control Medications

The medications in this category are preventive and meant to be used on an ongoing basis, as prescribed. They are not to be used now and then, or to relieve acute asthma symptoms.

Anti-Inflammatory Drugs	Long-Acting Beta-Agonists	Leukotriene Modifiers
<p>These medications are used to prevent or reduce inflammation and swelling in the airways.</p> <p>Inhaled Corticosteroids</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advair Diskus®* • Advair® HFA • AeroBid® • Asmanex® • Twisthaler® • Azmacort® • Flovent® HFA • Pulmicort Respules® • Pulmicort Turbuhaler® • QVAR® • Symbicort® <p>Oral Corticosteroids (also may be used for quick relief)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medrol® • Orapred® • Orapred ODT™ • Pediapred® • Prednisone • Prelone® <p>Cromolyn and Nedocromil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intal® • Tilade® 	<p>These medications are bronchodilators and are used to relax the muscles and open airways. Long-acting beta-agonists are used as maintenance drugs because they provide longer term control and have a slower onset of action. They should not be used as quick-relief medications.</p> <p>Inhaled Bronchodilators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advair Diskus®* • Foradil® Aerolizer® • Serevent® Diskus® <p>Theophylline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theolair™ • Uniphyl® <p>Oral Bronchodilators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VoSpire ER® 	<p>These medications modify the inflammatory response in asthma.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accolate® • Singulair® • Zyflo®

*Combination medication of Serevent and Flovent

Source:

American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (2007). You've been referred to an asthma specialist... here's what to expect [online]. Retrieved September 6, 2010. From <http://www.acaai.org/Patients/resources/Documents/YouveBeenReferred.pdf>.