

Asthma Controller Medicine-Inhaled Corticosteroids

The name of my controller medicine is _____.

An inhaled corticosteroid controls asthma symptoms. **You use this inhaler every day.**

How it Works

- Makes airways less “twitchy”
- Decreases airway swelling
- Decreases mucous
- Decreases how often you have asthma symptoms

Types

- **Flovent Diskus** (fluticasone): 3 strengths: 50 mcg, 100mcg & 250 mcg.
- **Flovent HFA[®]** (fluticasone): 3 strengths: 44mcg, 110mcg, & 220 mcg.
- **Pulmicort Flexhaler[®]**: (budesonide): 2 strengths: 90mcg & 180mcg.
- **Pulmicort Respules[®]**: for nebulizer (budesonide): 3 strengths: 0.25mg, 0.5 mg, & 1mg.
- **Asmanex Twisthaler[®]**: (mometasone): 2 strengths: 110mcg & 220mcg.
- **Asmanex HFA[®]**: (mometasone): 2 strengths: 100mcg & 200mcg.
- **QVAR[®]**: (beclomethasone): 2 strengths are 40mcg & 80mcg.
- **Alvesco[®]**: (ciclesonide): 2 strengths: 80mcg & 160 mcg.
- **Amuity Ellipta[®]**: (fluticasone): 3 strengths: 50mcg, 100mcg & 200 mcg.

How to Prepare the Inhaler

- **Flovent Diskus**: No prime needed.
- **Flovent[®] HFA**: Prime with 4 test sprays away from face before first use. Shake well for 5 seconds before each spray. If not used in last 7 days, or if dropped, prime by shaking well for 5 seconds and spray 1 test spray into the air away from the face.
- **Pulmicort Flexhaler[®]**: Do not shake. Keep level after “clicking.” Prime 2 clicks before first use only.
- **Asmanex[®]**: Does not need priming.
- **QVAR[®]**: Prime with 2 test sprays before first use and if not used in last 10 days.
- **Amuity Ellipta[®]**: Do not open cover until ready to use. Each time the cover is opened, a new dose will be ready for use.

Side Effects That May Happen Using a Lower Strength Inhaler

- Hoarse voice
- Cough
- Yeast infection in the mouth (thrush)

How to Decrease Side Effects

- Always rinse your mouth with water or brush your teeth after using. Do not swallow the water.
- Use a spacer device. You cannot use a spacer with diskus, redihaler or dry powder inhaler.
- Wash your face after using a mask with the spacer.

People with severe asthma who have taken high doses of inhaled corticosteroids for a long time are at greatest risk for side effects. Your doctor or nurse will review these side effects with you.

Inhaled corticosteroids may be increased or “stepped up” with the start of a cold or during an asthma flare-up or attack.

This is part of your yellow zone asthma action plan. This increased dose should be used for about 5-7 days or for 2 days after asthma symptoms are better. Then return to your green zone asthma action plan.

Tips When Using Metered Dose Inhalers
(Flovent HFA[®], QVAR HFA[®], Alvesco[®])

- Shake for 5 seconds before each use.
- Spacers are usually replaced once a year.
- Keep track of when your inhaler expired, especially if it is used as needed.

- Each inhaler has a set number of puffs. They are also called actuations. If your inhaler does not have a counter on it you need to figure out how many puffs you use a day so you know when your inhaler is empty. Mark on a calendar when you start a new inhaler and when it will be empty.

How to Clean the Inhaler and Spacer

Once a week, use a clean, dry cotton swab to clean the opening where the puff sprays out of the inhaler. Do not put the inhaler in water. Wash the spacer with dish soap and warm water weekly. Rinse with warm water and air dry on a clean towel.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 7/2023 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Reviewed by Dane County Asthma Coalition. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#6843