
Inhaled Steroid Medication

Other names for this medication:

- Alvesco[®] – ciclesonide
- Asmanex[®] – mometasone
- Flovent[®] – fluticasone
- Pulmicort[®] – budesonide
- QVAR[™] – beclomethasone

How does this medication work?

An inhaled steroid is used to control asthma by reducing inflammation, swelling and mucous in the airways. It is often the main medication used to treat your asthma. Regular use makes cough and asthma better.

To work best the inhaled steroid must be used as prescribed.

It works similar to cortisone tablets but in much smaller doses so it is less likely to cause side effects throughout the body. It does not relieve shortness of breath right away. The bronchodilator medication does this.

This medication begins to work within 24 hours but may take several days to weeks to completely reverse uncontrolled asthma.

How to use inhaled steroids

You need to take this medication the correct way for it to help you. Your dose will depend on your chest symptoms. When your symptoms are controlled, the dose may be reduced. Your doctor or health care provider will follow you closely to find the lowest dose you need to keep well.

When you are well, do not stop taking the medication unless you are told to do so. Take the dose you have been told to take each day.

If you forget a dose, take an extra dose the next time you use it.

If your asthma symptoms get worse, increase the dose 2 to 4 times as advised by your doctor or health care provider. If this does not help or your asthma gets worse, contact your doctor or health care provider. You may need other medication to help.

Please turn over →

While you are taking this medication you may notice

- hoarse voice
- sore mouth or throat

Irritation or a yeast infection can cause a sore throat.
Yeast causes white spots in the mouth and/or throat.
A doctor can give you medication to treat a yeast infection.

Other effects are rare but these may occur when inhaled steroid is given in high doses for long periods of time:

- bruising
- reduced rate of growth in some children

To prevent problems

- If you use a metered dose or pressurized inhaler, use a holding chamber or spacing device such as an Aerochamber[®], each time you take your medication.
- After inhaling the medication, rinse your mouth and gargle with water, then spit the water out.
- Work with your doctor or health care provider to find the smallest dose you need to control your asthma.