

Inhaled Corticosteroids for Asthma

Corticosteroids (CORE te co STAIR oids), also called inhaled steroids, are medicines that prevent asthma flare-ups. Your child breathes them into his or her lungs. They are also called “controller” medicines because they help control asthma symptoms. They must be used every day. Symptoms should get better in 2 to 3 weeks.

Brand names for this medicine

Qvar® (beclomethasone)	Advair® Diskus (fluticasone/salmeterol)
Flovent® (fluticasone) HFA	Advair® (fluticasone/salmeterol) HFA
Pulmicort® (budesonide)	Symbicort® (budesonide/formoterol)
Asmanex® Twisthaler® (mometasone)	AeroSpan™ (flunisolide)
Asmanex® (mometasone) HFA	Dulera® (mometasone/formoterol)

How this medicine works

Your child breathes these medicines into his lungs to treat asthma. They help reduce swelling in the airways on a daily basis and help prevent flare-ups. They may not help your child during an asthma flare-up, but your child should still use the medicine during episodes that have increased symptoms.

During an asthma flare-up, your child must use a “rescue” inhaler like albuterol (ProAir® HFA or Proventil® HFA) if he is having asthma symptoms.

How to give this medicine

- Read the label carefully and make sure you are giving your child the right dose. It is easy to confuse the many different dosage forms and strengths.
- Give the exact dose of medicine that your child’s doctor ordered.
- Stay with your child until he has used the right dose of medicine.
- Shake this medicine before giving it if it is a metered dose inhaler or liquid for use in a nebulizer.
- Do not shake this medicine if it is a dry powder inhaler.

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How to give this medicine, continued

- It is very important to give the medicine every day as ordered, even if your child is feeling fine. Do not change doses or stop the medicine without talking to your child's doctor.
- After each dose, your child should rinse his mouth with water or brush his teeth to wash the steroid medicine out of his mouth.
- Keep track of the remaining doses. It is important to keep a record of when the medicine is given. You may use a calendar or the Helping Hand: Medication Record, HH-V-1.
- Get this prescription refilled at least _____ days before the last dose is given. This is very important.

If you forget to give a dose

If you forget to give a dose of this medicine, give it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for the next dose, **do not** give the missed dose at all. **Do not** double the next dose. Instead, go back to your child's regular dosing schedule. If you have any questions about this, check with your child's doctor or pharmacist.

Medicine storage

- Store all medicine out of the reach of children.
- Keep the bottle tightly closed and store it in a dark, dry place (not in the bathroom or above the kitchen sink). This medicine does not work as well when kept in a light or humid place.
- Do not keep this medicine in the refrigerator. Store it at room temperature.
- Keep this medicine away from heat or direct sunlight.
- Do not use this medicine after the expiration date printed on the container.
- Check the label on your child's medicine. Each medicine container has directions to throw it away after being open for 30 to 60 days, even if the medicine is not gone.

Drug interactions

This medicine **should not** be taken with these foods, products or medicines:

- Tobacco products – your child should not smoke. Smoking irritates the lungs and makes the asthma worse. No one should smoke around your child because of the dangers of second-hand smoke.
- If your child is taking any other medicine or herbal supplements, tell the doctor and pharmacist. Some medicines for diabetes and diuretics (water pills) may affect how inhaled steroids control your child's asthma.

Warnings

- If your child is allergic to the ingredients in these medicines, he or she should not take the medicine. Call the doctor right away.
- Asthma is a disease that always changes. If asthma symptoms seem to be getting worse, call the doctor.

Special note for female patients

- If a patient thinks she might be pregnant, she should tell the doctor before she begins taking this or any other medicine.
- If a patient is breast-feeding her baby, she should tell her doctor before she begins taking this or any other medicine.

Possible side effects

Sore throat

Thrush (white spots in the mouth)

Dry mouth

Hoarse voice

What to do about side effects

If a skin rash occurs, call your child's doctor. He should brush his teeth or drink water after each dose. This will prevent thrush and a sore throat.

When to call for emergency help

Call for emergency help if:

- Your child has any of these signs of an allergic reaction: trouble breathing, swelling of the tongue, swelling of hands, feet or ankles.
- Your child's breathing is not getting better during an asthma flare-up.
- Your child's lips or fingernails turn blue or gray.

When to call the doctor

Call your child's doctor if:

- He is having a severe asthma attack.
- He is exposed to chickenpox or shingles.
- He is having any side effects that continue or are very bothersome.

Other advice about the medicine

- Tell the doctor and pharmacist if your child has an allergic reaction to any medicine.
- If you carry any medicine in your purse, keep it in its childproof bottle. Keep your purse out of the reach of children.
- Take all your child's medicines with you in the original bottles whenever he sees a doctor, goes to an emergency room or is admitted to the hospital. This helps doctors who may not know your child.
- Learn the name, spelling and dose of this medicine. Also, teach your child if he is old enough. You will need to know this information when you call your child's doctor or pharmacist.
- If your child takes too much of this medicine, or if someone else takes this medicine, first call the Central Ohio Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 (TTY 614-228-2272). They will tell you what to do.
- Do not stop giving this medicine or change the amount given without first talking with your child's doctor or pharmacist. Taking the same amount of medicine at the same times every day helps control your child's asthma symptoms and prevents an asthma flare-up.
- The doctor has prescribed this medicine for your child only. Do not give it to anyone else.
- Do not give expired medicine. Call the doctor's office if refills are needed.
- When your child goes to the dentist, be sure to tell the dentist what medicines he is taking and why.
- Tell your child's teacher, school nurse, coach, babysitter and others that he is taking this medicine and what side effects to watch for.
- This medicine comes with a patient information sheet. Make sure the pharmacist gives it to you and that you read it. Call your child's doctor or pharmacist with any questions about the medicine.

Follow-up visits

- If you have any questions, be sure to ask your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- You can expect to have regular follow-up visits with your child's doctor every 3 to 6 months.
- Write down all your questions as you think of them. Bring this list with you when you see the doctor.
- Be sure to call the doctor if you cannot keep an appointment.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist.