

List of Asthma Medications

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Asthma medications are categorized according to function, one which needs to be taken daily and controls long-term asthma symptoms is called, 'Controller Medication'. The other type of medication works to relieve the immediate symptoms of an asthma attack, and is called 'Reliever Medication'. The uses, side-effects and examples of each type of asthma medication are listed in the tables below.

Long-Term Controller Medications ¹					
	Inhaled Corticosteroids	Leukotriene Modifiers	Long-Acting Beta Agonists	Combination Inhalers	Theophylline
Use	May need to use these medications for several days to weeks before they reach their maximum benefit.	Help relieve asthma symptoms for up to 24 hours.	Inhaled medication that opens airways and reduces inflammation. Can mask asthma deterioration; therefore don't use them for an acute asthma attack.	Contain a long-acting beta agonist along with a corticosteroid.	Daily pill that helps keep the airways open (bronchodilator) by relaxing the muscles around the airways.
Side-Effects	Low risk of side effects, generally safe for long-term use.	In rare cases linked to psychological reactions, such as agitation, aggression, hallucinations, depression and suicidal thinking.	May increase risk of a severe asthma attack, so they can only be taken in combination with an inhaled corticosteroid.	May increase the risk of a severe asthma attack.	Not as often used now as in past years.
Examples	Fluticasone (Flovent Diskus, Flonase) Budesonide (Pulmicort, Rhinocort) Mometasone (Nasonex, Asmanex Twisthaler) Ciclesonide (Alvesco, Omnaris) Flunisolide (Aerobid, Aerospan HFA) Beclomethasone (Qvar, Qnasl)	Montelukast (Singulair) Zafirlukast (Accolate) Zileuton (Zyflo)	Salmeterol (Serevent) Formoterol (Foradil, Perforomis)	Fluticasone-salmeterol (Advair Diskus) Budesonide-Formoterol (Symbicort) Mometasone-formoterol (Dulera)	Theophylline (Theo-24, Elixophyllin)

¹ The Mayo Clinic. Accessed August 7, 2012.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/asthma/DS00021/DSECTION=treatments-and-drugs>

Short-Term Reliever Medications²				
	Short-Acting Beta Agonists	Ipratropium	Oral and Intravenous Corticosteroids	Bronchial Thermoplasty
Use	Inhaled, bronchodilators which act within minutes to rapidly ease the symptoms of an asthma attack. Can be taken using a portable inhaler or nebulizer.	A bronchodilator that acts quickly to immediately relax your airways. Mostly used for emphysema and chronic bronchitis.	Relieve airway inflammation caused by severe asthma.	Used for severe asthma that doesn't improve with inhaled corticosteroids or other long-term asthma medications. Over the span of three outpatient visits, bronchial thermoplasty heats the insides of bronchi with an electrode, reducing the smooth muscle inside the airways. This limits the ability of airways to tighten, making breathing easier and possibly reducing asthma attacks.
Side-Effects			Can cause serious side effects when used long-term, so used only on a short-term basis to treat severe asthma symptoms	
Examples	Albuterol (ProAir HFA, Ventolin HFA) Levalbuterol (Xopenex HFA) Pirbuterol (Maxair)	Ipratropium (Atrovent)	Prednisone Methylprednisolone	

In most cases, a controller medication is prescribed alongside a reliever medication to create a flexible treatment which will allow you to adapt to any changes in your symptoms. Furthermore, keeping a detailed record of your medication use and symptoms is highly recommended so your doctor can analyze your condition and adjust your treatment accordingly. In any case, a doctor aims to prescribe the least asthma medication possible.

The above tables are only meant to be used as supplementary information and all changes to your asthma treatment should be done by a doctor.

If you are interested in learning more about asthma, or asthma treatment, please click on the links below.

²The Mayo Clinic. Accessed August 7, 2012.

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