

Medicines for Asthma

If you have asthma, it's in your lungs all the time, even if you don't feel it. That's why it is important to take your asthma medicines as directed by your healthcare provider. There are two main types of medicine for asthma. They are used in different ways.

Daily Preventive Asthma Medicine

Why use it?	Helps prevent asthma symptoms
What does it do?	Helps to reduce swelling inside the airways or relax the airway muscles
When do you take it?	Take it every day, even when you feel fine, as directed by your provider
How do you take it?	Often taken using an inhaler or as pills
Important to know:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use for sudden asthma symptoms • Over time, your provider may stop, change, or add daily preventive asthma medicine • Try to take it at the same time each day, as directed by your provider
Taken with an inhaler includes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhaled corticosteroid • Inhaled corticosteroid combined with a long-acting bronchodilator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Your provider may tell you to take this if you still have asthma symptoms while taking an inhaled corticosteroid
Taken as pills includes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leukotriene modifier, Theophylline
My daily preventive asthma medicine is:	_____

Rescue Medicine

Why use it?	Helps with sudden asthma symptoms
What does it do?	Helps open your airways when you have asthma symptoms
When do you take it?	Take your rescue inhaler when you have sudden asthma symptoms, as directed by your provider
How do you take it?	Often taken using an inhaler
Important to know:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone with asthma needs a rescue medicine, such as a rescue inhaler • Keep your rescue inhaler with you at all times • Talk with your provider if you use a rescue inhaler more than 2 days a week
Includes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albuterol, Levalbuterol, Pirbuterol
My rescue medicine is:	_____

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What About Steroids and Asthma?

- Steroids for asthma are NOT the same as the steroids used to build muscle
 - Steroids used for asthma are called corticosteroids
 - Steroids used to build muscle are called anabolic steroids
- You may take an inhaled corticosteroid every day as a daily preventive asthma medicine. This helps reduce swelling in the airways, which helps relieve asthma symptoms such as coughing and wheezing
- Steroids for asthma are often taken as an inhaler
- If asthma is severe, steroid pills or liquids may be taken for a short time

Taking Asthma Medicine: Plan Ahead

Think about how you can help yourself with your asthma medicine. Plan ahead and fill out this chart to help you know what to do. Check the things you want to do and add your own ideas.

Question or Problem	What to Do
How do I remember to take my daily preventive asthma medicine as directed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Try to take it at the same time each day <input type="checkbox"/> Take it around the same time you do other things each day, like brushing your teeth, eating dinner, or: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
How can I remember to always carry my rescue inhaler?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always carry your rescue inhaler in the same place <input type="checkbox"/> Find the place to keep it that works for you – Purse – Backpack <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
How can I keep track of how much I use my rescue inhaler?	<input type="checkbox"/> If you use your rescue inhaler, circle that day on a calendar – Write down how many times you used it – Tell your healthcare provider if you use it more than 2 days in a week <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Always talk to your healthcare provider before making any medicine changes.