

Medications for Chronic Respiratory Disease

Reliever Inhalers

- ★ **Salbutamol** (Ventolin, Salamol, Aerolin)
- ★ **Terbutaline** (Bricanyl)

What do they do?

- Short acting (**4-6 hours**)
- Work quickly to help relieve breathlessness
- Open up/widen your airways by relaxing the muscles in your lungs
- Helps with shortness of breath, wheeze and/or cough
- Use **x 2 puffs** up to **x 4 times** a day as needed
-

Possible side effects

- Shaking, palpitations, muscle cramps (If you experience these – discuss with GP)

Preventer Inhalers

- ★ **Tiotropium** (Spiriva handihaler / Respimat / Braltus)
- ★ **Glycopyrronium** (Seebri breezhaler)
- ★ **Aclidinium** (Eklira genuair)
- ★ **Umeclidinium** (Incruse Ellipta)

What do they do?

- Helps to open up/widen the airways
- Must be used daily to get most benefit
- Helps to keep airways open and help to control symptoms (reduce breathlessness)
- Not effective for quick relief of breathlessness

Possible side effects

- Dry mouth

Remember – Do not stop taking this inhaler even if you feel well!!!

Preventer Combination Inhalers

- Sometimes if the above group of inhalers do not work well enough for you, your prescription may be changed.
- The inhaler device will likely remain the same but the medication will be different
- Please ask us if you have any questions about this.

Steroid and Preventer Combination Inhalers

- ★ **Symbicort Turbohaler** (Formoterol & Budesonide)
- ★ **Seretide Accuhaler** (Salmeterol & Fluticasone)
- ★ **Fostair MDI or Nexthaler** (Formoterol & Budesonide)
- ★ **Relvar Ellipta** (Vilanterol & Fluticasone)
- ★ **Duosp Spiromax** (Formoterol & Budesonide)

What do they do?

- Long acting bronchodilator (airway opener) with an inhaled steroid (low dose)
- To be used twice daily
- Helps reduce swelling and inflammation in your airways
- Helps to reduce exacerbations (when you have a worsening of your symptoms)
- **Controls** symptoms to reduce breathlessness
- This will not relieve symptoms or a quick attack of breathlessness. It is used as a preventative

Possible side effects

- Sore throat, thrush in mouth, hoarseness, tremor, palpitations
 - ★ Reduce mouth irritation by rinsing mouth out after use and by using a spacer device

Triple combination therapies

- **Trimbow & Trelegy Ellipta**
- For moderate / severe COPD only who are not adequately controlled with a steroid and preventer inhaler.
- Combination of inhaler corticosteroid and 2 long-acting bronchodilators, which reduced inflammation and keeps the airways open by various mechanisms.
- Used as a **preventive inhaler**
- Do not stop taking, even when well



Rinse mouth out after use



Can be used with a spacer (Trimbow inhaler only!)

Breathing Tablets – Theophylline

- ★ **Uniphyllin** → Help to keep airways open.
→ Try to stick to the same brand.
- ★ **Phyllocontin** → Slow release tablet to be taken as prescribed.

Possible side effects

- Nausea, shakiness, palpitations, indigestion.

Please let your GP know if your smoking status changes when taking these tablets!

Sputum Capsules – Mucolytics

- ★ **Carbocisteine (Mucodyne)**

What do they do?

- Reduces mucus thickness and stickiness within lungs
- Mucus becomes more watery which makes it easier to cough up
- Not suitable for everyone – only if you have a chronic, productive cough



Steroid Tablets

- ★ **Prednisolone**

What do they do?

- Treat flare ups
- A small number of people may be on a low dose long term
- Reduces swelling & inflammation in your airways
- Take in the morning **AFTER FOOD**

Possible side effects

- Osteoporosis (brittle bones), weight gain, diabetes, skin thinning & bruising

Bone Protection for Long Term Steroids

- ★ **Alendronate (Fosamax)**
- ★ **Risedronate (Actonel)**
- ★ **Calcium & Vitamin D tablets (Calceos, Calcichew, D3 Forte, Adcal)**

Who are they for?

- Anyone on steroid tablets for more than 3 months
- Anyone needing lots of short course steroid treatment
- If your GP thinks your high risk of having brittle bones

Possible side effects

- Indigestion

Rescue Packs

- Emergency prescription of Antibiotics +/- Steroids
- Keep at home to be used if you start with a chest infection
- Always phone your GP practice if you have started treatment
- Always make sure your rescue pack is replenished

Spacers

What is a spacer?

- Spacers are large empty devices (or tubes), usually made out of plastic that attach to certain inhalers to optimise the amount of medication inhaled.
- Spacers are useful if you struggle with inhaler technique, are very breathless and when you are unwell.
- Attach the inhaler to one end, your mouthpiece (or facemask) at the other, press your inhaler twice and slowly breathe in and out 5-6 breaths.
- If you are breathing too sharply or quickly the device will whistle at you, newer devices have a flow point to show if you are using it effectively.



How to clean your spacer...

- Soak weekly with water and washing up liquid, more if unwell.
- Rinse thoroughly and leave to dry naturally, do not scrub / wipe.

Take Home Message

Inhalers are not the only treatment for Chronic Respiratory Disease!

The best and most cost effective treatments are:



1. Giving up smoking
2. Annual flu jabs
3. Pneumonia jab
4. Pulmonary rehabilitation (The Breathe Team)

For Further information visit: www.thebreatheprogramme.co.uk

Inhalers

You can take your inhalers in different ways.

★ **Dry powder inhalers**

- Suck in as hard as you can



★ **Metered Dose Inhalers**

- Use a slow deep breath in
- They produce a puff of medication like an aerosol
- Can be used with a spacer



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Triple combination

- Long acting bronchodilator (airway opener) with an inhaled steroid (low dose)
- **Trimbow** (Formoterol/beclometasone/glycopyrronium)



- **Trelegy Ellipta**

- ★ Both devices contain a steroid so rinse mouth after use
- ★ Can be used with a spacer device (Trimbow device only!)

