

Bronchodilators (quick-acting inhaled)

Generic name	Brand name
<input type="checkbox"/> albuterol	Ventolin [®] , Proventil [®]
<input type="checkbox"/> pirbuterol	Maxair Autohaler [®]
<input type="checkbox"/> levalbuterol	Xopenex [®]

How does the medicine work?

This medicine opens the airways by relaxing the muscles around the airways. It works quickly to stop an episode of coughing or wheezing. It also prevents symptoms when used just before exercise or play.

The nebulizer and inhaler forms of these medicines are most often used because they work best to deliver medicine directly to the lungs. They cause fewer side effects than oral forms of these medicines.

This medicine should only be taken if your child has symptoms and **not** as a routine unless your child's doctor has told you differently.

If the benefits of this medicine do not last at least 3 hours, it may be a sign that your child's asthma is getting out of control.

Talk to the doctor if your child needs to take this medicine to stop asthma symptoms more often than 3 times per week. This is a sign that your child may need another medicine to prevent symptoms.

How should I give it?

Most of these medicines are available in both nebulizer and inhaler forms.

Giving a nebulizer treatment (neb)

Follow these steps.

1. Put the correct amount of medicine into the neb cup.
2. Intal[®] (cromolyn) or Pulmicort[®] (budesonide) may be mixed with albuterol.
3. Give the neb as directed in the education sheet, "Nebulizer treatments."

If you have questions about which medicines can be mixed together, ask the doctor or pharmacist.

Using an inhaler

If your child is using the Maxair Autohaler[®] do not use a spacer. If your child is using any of the other inhalers, a spacer must be used to get the best effect of the medicine. (See the education sheet, "Inhalers.") If you do not have a spacer or you do not understand how to use it, ask the doctor or pharmacist.

Wait 1 minute between puffs of the inhaler to get the most benefit. This gives the first puff time to work so the second puff can get deeper into the lungs.

Are there any precautions about food or other medicines?

Caffeine may increase the side effects.

If using other inhalers at the same time, use the quick-acting bronchodilator first.

If your child is taking medicines for depression, heart problems, or thyroid problems, check with your doctor or pharmacist.

What should I do if a dose is missed?

If your child is taking this medicine on a routine schedule and misses a dose, give it as soon as possible and space out the rest of the day's doses. **Never give a double dose.**

What are the side effects of this medicine?

Side effects may include a fast heartbeat, shaky hands, headache, or jitteriness. These should decrease as your child's body gets used to the medicine.

When should I call the clinic?

Call the clinic if:

- needing to use this medicine more than 3 times in a week to stop episodes
- medicine's benefit lasts less than 3 hours
- severe headache or tremors
- fast pounding heartbeat

Call 911 if:

- chest pains longer than 15 minutes
- seizures
- trouble breathing
- lips or fingernails are blue or gray

What else do I need to know?

You and your child should know the names of all the medicines he or she is taking.

Share this information with anyone involved in your child's care.

Always make sure you have enough medicine on hand. Each time you refill the prescription, check to see how many refills are left. If no refills are left the pharmacy will need 2 or 3 days to contact the clinic to renew the prescription.

Store all medicines in their original container and away from direct sunlight or heat. Do not store in humid places such as the bathroom. Inhalers are designed to work at room temperature. Do not allow inhalers to freeze or become very hot. Keep medicines of children's reach, locked up if possible.

If too much or the wrong kind of medicine is taken, call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the clinic or pharmacy.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: www.childrensmn.org.

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