

## Corticosteroids (inhaled)

| Generic name                            | Brand name         |
|---|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> beclomethasone | QVAR®              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> budesonide     | Pulmicort®         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> flunisolide    | AeroBid®, Nasarel® |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fluticasone    | Flovent®           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mometasone     | Azmanex®           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> triamcinolone  | Azmacort®,         |

### How does the medicine work?

Inhaled corticosteroids (kore-tuh-ko-stair-oyds) decrease and prevent swelling, inflammation, and mucus (phlegm) inside the airways. They do not make you feel better right away. It may take 3 to 6 weeks before the swelling is decreased.

Corticosteroids are naturally made in the body to fight swelling. They are not the same as the steroids that some athletes have used to increase muscle mass and strength.

This medicine needs to be taken every day even when your child is well. Do not stop using it until your child's doctor has told you to do so.

**Never use this medicine to treat an asthma episode.** Use a quick-acting bronchodilator inhaler like albuterol to stop an episode.

### How should I give it?

Inhaled corticosteroids are available as a metered dose inhaler, a dry powder, and a nebulizer form. Ask your nurse, pharmacist or doctor to show you how to use this medicine. See the education sheet, "Inhalers" for instructions.

It is most important to take it **every day**, and to take the prescribed number of doses each day.

### Are there any precautions about food or other medicines?

There are no problems with food.

If your child needs to use a quick-acting bronchodilator at the same time as taking the corticosteroid inhaler, use the bronchodilator first.

### What should I do if a dose is missed?

If a dose is missed, take it as soon as you remember, and try to space the doses out so you get the right number that day.

### What are the side effects?

Inhaled corticosteroids have not been shown to cause serious side effects even when used for long periods of time. This is because they are used in low doses and inhaled directly into the lungs. They are safer and cause fewer side effects than taking frequent oral "bursts" of prednisone.

Inhaled corticosteroids may cause thrush, a yeast infection of tiny white spots in the mouth. If you notice this, call your child's doctor. To prevent thrush, after using the medicine, your child should rinse the mouth with water and spit it out.

### **When should I call the clinic?**

- fever, chills
- cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose
- signs of thrush (sores or white patches in mouth or throat)
- worsening of asthma symptoms
- signs of allergic reaction:
  - rash or hives
  - swelling or tingling in hands, face, mouth, or throat
  - trouble breathing - **call 911**

### **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 health care.

Always make sure you have enough medicine on hand. Ask your child's doctor or pharmacist how long each inhaler should last and get into the habit of refilling your inhalers regularly. 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.

Inhalers are designed to work at room temperature. Do not allow inhalers to freeze or become very hot. Do not store in humid places such as the bathroom. Keep them out 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](http://www.childrensmn.org).

Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota  
Patient/Family Education  
2525 Chicago Ave. South  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
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