

Asthma Treatment



Medication Used to Treat Asthma

Many children with asthma need to take medication at some point. Some children take a combination of medication to help manage their asthma. There are two types of asthma medication.

Controller Medication:

These medications *control* asthma and can prevent asthma attacks. Some children may need to take medication on a regular basis to prevent an asthma episode. These medications are taken on a regular basis, usually daily. For children with persistent asthma, daily use of inhaled corticosteroids is the most effective treatment.

Quick Relief/Rescue Medication:

Some children may only need medication when they are having an asthma episode or to prevent exercise-related asthma attacks. These medications work quickly to relieve asthma symptoms, but do not control airway inflammation or airway sensitivity.

Ways to Give Asthma Medication

Asthma medications most commonly come in an inhaled form. How the child takes the medication depends on the type of medication and the age of the child.

Nebulizer Machine:

A nebulizer machine converts liquid medicine into a mist that can be breathed into the lungs. The child breathes normally when using a nebulizer.

Metered-Dose Inhaler:

A metered dose inhaler (MDI) is used to get the medication directly to the child's lungs.

Metered-Dose Inhaler with a Spacer Device:

A spacer can be attached to a metered dose inhaler (MDI). When the MDI is pushed, the medication goes into the tube of the spacer. The child then easily breathes in the medication from the spacer tube over several breaths.

Dry Powder Inhaler:

A dry powder inhaler is used to deliver dry powder medication directly to the lungs. Dry powder inhalers work differently than metered-dose inhalers, since the inhaler is activated when the child takes a breath.

Oral Medication:

Oral medication may be prescribed for children either alone or in combination with inhaled medication.

Peak Flow Meter

School-age children with persistent asthma can keep track of how well their asthma is controlled by using a peak flow meter. A peak flow meter is a portable handheld device used to measure how hard and fast the child can push air out of his lungs. Peak flow meter measurements can provide important information to help manage the child's asthma.



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