

- Title: Asthma Treatment in Children: Information for Parents
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- Key words: inhaled corticosteroids, children, asthma, safety
- Abstract:
 - Parents are often worried about long-term inhaled steroid use in their children with asthma. This handout explains asthma as a disease as well as going over the risks and benefits of inhaled steroid use.
- This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

What are the side effects of Steroids?

Steroids taken by mouth for a long time can cause several serious side effects:

- Decreased growth or faster puberty in children
- High blood pressure
- Changes in mood (ex. more angry)
- Changes in appearance (swelling in face)

Most of these side effects go away when you stop Steroid treatment.

NONE of these side effects have been consistently associated with **INHALED** Steroids

Summary

- See your doctor if you or your child is having troubles breathing**
- Asthma is a treatable problem with breathing**
- Cigarette smoke makes Asthma worse**
- Treatment for Asthma includes avoiding triggers, breathing treatments and pills**
- INHALED Steroids are SAFE to use for weeks, months or years**

Patient Education Tool

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Asthma Treatment in Children



Information for Parents

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a reversible over reaction of a person's lungs. This makes it hard for that person to breathe. It will sometimes go away on its own but it often needs to be treated and death can result if treatment is not received in time. Signs someone may have asthma include:

- difficulty breathing or breathing fast
- wheezing
- coughing
- trouble breathing when playing or exercising

How do you get Asthma?

It is not well understood how Asthma begins. It is known that several things increase someone's chance of having Asthma. These include:

- A relative with Asthma
- Having Allergies or Eczema
- Being the first-born child
- If your mom smoked cigarettes when she was pregnant with you
- If anyone smokes cigarettes in your home or daycare

How does the Doctor know I have Asthma?

When you tell your Doctor your story they will ask you some questions about your breathing, your medications, the environment you live in, and what other concerns you may have. If they are concerned you have Asthma they may try several things:

- Have you write a diary of when you are not feeling well
- Try a medication to see if it makes you feel better
- Test your breathing in their office using a meter or computer program
- Have you take a Chest Xray

Will I always have Asthma?

Some people who have Asthma when they are young grow out of it later in life but most have some type of Asthma the rest of their life.

How do you treat Asthma?

There are several ways to control Asthma:

- Avoid "triggers" like allergies, dust and cigarette smoke
- Breathing treatments like inhalers and nebulizers
- Pills to help with allergies and Asthma

What are Steroids?

Steroids are a product your body makes naturally. In Asthma, steroids are used to control how your body reacts to things that make it difficult for you to breathe. Steroids do not work instantly and must be taken every day to work correctly.

Can Steroids hurt me or my children?

People are often afraid of taking steroids for a long time. How often you take them depends on how you take them.

- Steroids taken by mouth should not be taken for more than a couple weeks
- Steroids that you breathe in can be taken for many weeks, months or even years without serious side effects