



## Relievers

### Short Acting Beta Agonist Bronchodilator

### Anticholinergic Drugs

### Metered Dose Inhalers (MDIs)

### Dry Powder Inhalers (DPIs)

Beta agonist bronchodilator metered dose inhalers (MDIs) (short acting), and dry powder inhalers (DPIs) such as Ventolin, Proventil, Maxair, albuterol and Xopenex are used as needed when acute shortness of breath or coughing occurs. These medications relieve acute asthma by relaxing the smooth muscles that surround the airways. They are also used before exercise to prevent symptoms of cough, wheeze, and shortness of breath that can occur because of exercise.

Long acting bronchodilators Serevent and Foradil may be used for continuous effects on the air passages. These medications are never used for reliever medications.

The MDIs and DPIs should be used only as directed by your Asthma & Allergy Center doctor because serious side effects can occur with improper or overuse. Some of the more common side effects include: nervousness, shaking, sweating, headaches, nausea, and vomiting. More serious side effects may include: heart pounding, an increased heart rate, and elevated blood pressure. Patients with a history of heart disease or high blood pressure should use bronchodilators only as directed by your Asthma & Allergy Center doctor. No more than one reliever inhaler should be used per month.

Please call your Asthma & Allergy Center doctor's office if:

1. More than one reliever inhaler is used per month.
2. Rescue MDI does not relieve breathing problems.
3. Need to use these medications more than 2 times a week.

These signs mean that your asthma has become more severe and you need other medication.

Wash inhalers (MDIs) daily. Remove the canister from the mouthpiece and rinse the plastic case in warm water. However, do not immerse a dry powder inhaler (DPI) in water. Doing so will plug up the inhaler. Dry the MDI before putting the inhaler back together. Keep the cap on the mouthpiece when not in use to keep dust and foreign objects from getting into the mouthpiece and being accidentally inhaled.

## **Anticholinergic Drugs (Atrovent)**

Anticholinergic drugs may be an alternative for patients who cannot tolerate inhaled short-acting beta agonists bronchodilators. These drugs work by expanding your air passages (reversing bronchoconstriction) and may also decrease mucous gland secretion, making it easier to breathe. A common side effect is drying of the mouth. This medication may be used either by your Asthma & Allergy Center doctor as a quick-relief medication administered by nebulizer or MDI or can be used as a long term (controller) medication.