



**acceptance:** agreement by patient to a treatment routine they understand

**Accolate:** brand name for zafirlukast, a leukotriene modifier (oral)

**acute:** sudden

**adrenal insufficiency:** inability of the body's adrenal glands to produce an adequate amount of cortisol, the hormone needed to respond to stress

**adrenaline (epinephrine):** a quick relief medicine, produced by the body and available in synthetic form

**adrenergic:** adrenaline-like medicine

**adverse:** undesirable

**Aerobid:** brand name for flunisolide, an inhaled steroid medicine, controller

**AeroChamber:** brand of holding chamber

**Air Watch:** airflow monitoring device with electronic link to the doctor

**airflow:** the rate at which you can blow air out of your lungs

**albuterol:** generic name of Proventil, Ventolin and ProAir; beta<sub>2</sub>-agonists, quick relief medicines

**allergen:** any substance that can induce an allergy

**allergist:** doctor who specializes in understanding and treating allergies

**allergy:** condition in which the body has an immune reaction to a substance that is normally harmless

**alveoli:** air sacs located at the end of the tiniest airways

**ampule (ampoule):** small, sealed vial containing medicine in liquid form

**anaphylaxis:** severe allergic reaction throughout the body which can be fatal if not treated immediately; commonly includes respiratory symptoms, itching, hives, and fainting

**antibody:** protein that develops in the body in response to a foreign substance (antigen)

**anticholinergic:** type of inhaled quick relief medicine that acts through a different mechanism than beta<sub>2</sub>-agonists

**antihistamine:** generic name for medicine that blocks the actions of histamine, such as swelling and itching

**antiinflammatory:** medicine that counteracts inflammation

**asthma:** inflammatory disease of the airways characterized by airways that are hyperresponsive and symptoms that can be reversed

**Asthma Peak Flow Diary:** an individual record of peak flow scores, medicines, asthma signs, and triggers; helps in monitoring peak flow trends in people 5 years and older

**asthma signs:** physical indicators of asthma that can be observed by another person

**Asthma Signs Diary:** an individual record of asthma signs scores, medicines, and triggers that helps in monitoring the trends in asthma signs in children under 5 years of age

**asthma treatment zone:** a range of peak flow scores or total scores of asthma signs that calls for following a particular treatment plan

**asymptomatic:** without symptoms

**atopic:** allergic

**Atrovent:** brand name for ipratropium bromide, an inhaled quick relief medicine

**attack:** a dramatic term for an episode of asthma

**Azmacort:** brand name for triamcinolone, an inhaled steroid medicine, controller

**beclomethasone:** generic name for Vanceril, Beclovent, and QVAR, inhaled steroid medicines, controller

**Beclovent:** brand name for beclomethasone, an inhaled steroid medicine, controller

**beta-blockers:** medicines that block the action of beta-agonist medicines, and responses of the sympathetic nervous system

**beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist:** a class of quick relief medicine

**b.i.d.:** a dosing schedule calling for medicine to be taken twice a day

**blood concentration:** amount of a substance in a given quantity of blood expressed as weight per unit volume (e.g., mg/ml)

**blow-by technique:** a low-efficiency method for administering inhaled medicines

**breath-activated:** method for triggering the release of medicine from a device by inhalation

**breathing cycle:** total time it takes to breathe in and out once

**breathing rate:** number of breaths per minute

**Brethaire:** brand name for terbutaline, an inhaled beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist, quick relief medicine

**Brethine:** a brand name for terbutaline, an inhaled beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist, quick relief medicine

**Bricanyl:** a brand name for terbutaline, an inhaled beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist, quick relief medicine

**bronchi:** large air passages or airways

**bronchiolitis:** inflammation of the smallest airways (bronchioles); caused by a virus

**bronchitis:** inflammation of the large airways (bronchi) due to asthma, a virus or pollutant

**bronchoconstriction:** narrowing of the airways caused by contraction of the smooth muscles encircling them (same as bronchospasm)

**bronchodilator:** medicine that causes the airways to open

**bronchospasm:** narrowing of the airways caused by contraction of the smooth muscles encircling them (same as bronchoconstriction)

**budesonide:** generic name for Pulmicort, an inhaled steroid medicine, controller

  

**candidiasis:** yeast infection in the mouth or vagina; same as moniliasis

**capillary:** tiniest blood vessel

**cartilage:** strong, flexible tissue that supports the large airways

**cc:** abbreviation for cubic centimeter; equivalent to a milliliter (ml) or 1/1000 of a liter. This metric measurement is equal to 1/5 of a measuring teaspoon.

**CDN:** compressor driven nebulizer

**CFC:** chlorofluorocarbon; propellant used in most metered dose inhalers

**chemical mediator:** class of chemical that plays a role in the asthma reaction; includes histamine and leukotrienes

**chronic:** continuous or long-term

**cilia:** tiny hairlike projections from the surface of the cells that line the airway

**closed mouth technique:** a method for inhaling medicine from an MDI; open-mouth technique is preferred

**compliance:** doing exactly what the doctor says, whether or not you understand it

**compressor:** machine that produces air under pressure

**compressor driven nebulizer (CDN):** electric- or battery-powered device that uses compressed air to create a medicine mist

**consultation:** full review of a patient's asthma history, physical exam, and other information; leads to the creation of a written asthma management plan

**controlled-release:** same as long-acting, sustained-release, or slow-release; applies to some theophylline and albuterol preparations

**controller:** medicine that prevents or reduces the frequency and severity of asthma episodes, taken daily

**corticosteroid:** another term for a steroid or cortisone-like medicine  
**coughing asthma:** form of asthma in which coughing is the only symptom  
**croup:** illness usually produced by a virus, in which the larynx and trachea are inflamed; produces a barking cough

**dander:** scales of dead skin

**decongestant:** a medicine that reduces congestion (swelling)

**discard date:** date when an MDI should be thrown away because it will no longer deliver a safe puff of medicine

**Diskus:** brand name for dry powder inhaler device

**diurnal variation:** change within a day

**DPI:** dry powder inhaler

**dry powder inhaler:** device for inhaling asthma medicines in powder form; depends on the force of inhalation to disperse medicine into the lungs

**EasiVent:** brand of holding chamber

**eczema:** a skin rash, also known as atopic dermatitis

**effort monitor:** part of a holding chamber which indicates the effort a person is making when inhaling medicine

**electrostatic air precipitator:** air cleaner

**eosinophils:** white blood cells involved in inflammation

**ephedrine:** oral adrenergic medicine, bronchodilator; no longer commonly used because of its adverse effects

**epinephrine (adrenaline):** a quick relief medicine, produced by the body and available in synthetic form

**EpiPen:** brand name for epinephrine for intramuscular use (injection); used to treat anaphylaxis

**episode (flare):** period of time when asthma signs or symptoms occur, peak flow scores drop, breathing is changed, or additional asthma medicine is needed

**exacerbation:** worsening or new episode

**exercise induced asthma:** a form of asthma in which exercise is the only trigger

**exhale:** to breathe out

**expiration:** act of breathing out

**extended-release:** medicine preparation that acts over a longer period of time than the standard preparation; also called slow-release, sustained-release

**E-Z Spacer:** brand of holding chamber

**family practitioner:** primary care physician who sees patients of all ages

**FEV<sub>1</sub>:** forced expiratory volume in one second. This measurement of airflow is done using a spirometer or simple FEV<sub>1</sub> meter.. It provides information about the status of the large and small airways

**flare (episode):** period of time when asthma signs or symptoms occur, peak flow scores drop, breathing is changed, or additional asthma medicine is needed

**Flovent:** brand name for fluticasone, an inhaled steroid medicine available in MDI or DPI, controller

**flow monitor:** part of a holding chamber which makes a sound if inhalation is too fast

**flunisolide:** generic name for Aerobid, an inhaled steroid medicine, controller

**fluticasone:** generic name for Flovent, an inhaled steroid medicine, controller

**gastroesophageal reflux:** (also called stomach acid reflux) backward flow of material from stomach to the esophagus; causes irritation which can lead to bronchospasm

**green zone:** asthma treatment zone in which there are no symptoms and peak flow is 80 to 100 percent of the personal best

**growth retardation:** slowing of rate at which height increases

**Gyrocaps:** capsule containing Slo-Phyllin, a slow-release theophylline preparation, controller

**hay fever:** allergic condition of the nose and eyes brought on mainly by ragweed or other pollen

**HEPA filter:** abbreviation for a "high-efficiency particulate air" filter; removes tiny particles from the air

**HFA propellant:** hydrofluoroalkane, a propellant used in MDIs which does not destroy ozone in the stratosphere (upper atmosphere)

**high yellow zone:** asthma treatment zone in which there are only mild symptoms and peak flow is 65 to 80 percent of personal best

**histamine:** one of the chemical mediators of the asthma reaction

**hives:** itchy swellings of skin usually due to allergy

**holding chamber:** inhalation device used with a metered dose inhaler that holds the medicine mist to improve medicine effect

**home care company:** organization that provides many aspects of asthma care in the home, including teaching, monitoring, and review of environment and treatment

**hyperresponsive:** refers to airways that overreact to various asthma triggers

**hyperventilation:** excessive rate and depth of breathing

**IAQ:** indoor air quality

**I/E ratio:** in/out ratio, or relative length of inhale compared to exhale

**IgE:** immunoglobulin E, an antibody that reacts with an allergen, initiating the asthma reaction

**immunotherapy:** synonymous with allergy shots, injection treatment, hyposensitization, desensitization

**indication:** reason to use

**indoor air quality (IAQ):** overall healthfulness of the air inside a building

**inflammation:** a response of the body to physical or chemical triggers; includes swelling due to movement of cells, fluid, and chemicals into the area

**inhalation device:** apparatus for inhaling asthma medicine

**inhaled steroid:** inhaled medicine that prevents inflammation in the airways and reduces inflammation that already exists; the most commonly prescribed type of controller medicine for people with persistent asthma

**inhaler:** also metered dose inhaler (MDI). Device that uses propellant to create a medicine mist that can be breathed into the airways

**I/O ratio:** in/out ratio, or relative length of inhale compared to exhale

**inspiration:** act of breathing in

**InspirEase:** brand of holding chamber

**inspiration-expiration ratio:** see in/out (I/O) ratio

**intermittent flow director:** a vent in the nebulizer tubing that, when covered, allows production of mist

**internist:** primary care physician who sees adult patients

**intra-dermal:** into the skin

**intravenous:** into a vein

**intubation:** placing a tube into the trachea to enable artificial breathing; can be a lifesaving procedure during a severe asthma episode

**ipratropium:** generic name for Atrovent, an anticholinergic medicine, quick relief medicine

**irritant:** a nonallergenic substance that may provoke a reaction in the airways

**kg:** kilogram; 1,000 grams or 2.2 pounds

**levalbuterol:** generic name for Xopenex, a beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist; quick relief medicine

**leukotriene:** chemical mediator involved in the asthma reaction

**leukotriene modifier medicine:** class of medicine that blocks the formation or action of leukotrienes in the airways, thereby blocking part of the asthma reaction, controller

**liter (L):** metric measurement, slightly more than a quart

**liters/minute (L/min):** a flow rate, applied to peak flow or oxygen delivery

**long-acting:** synonymous with slow-release or sustained-release when referring to a theophylline or beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist preparation

**low yellow zone:** asthma treatment zone in which symptoms are moderate and peak flow is 50 to 65 percent of personal best

**malingering:** pretending to be ill

**mask:** a device that fits snugly over the nose and mouth; used to deliver inhaled asthma medicines

**mast cell:** one of the cell types that contain chemicals which can produce the asthma reaction

**Maxair:** brand name for pirbuterol, a beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist, quick relief medicine

**Maxair Autohaler:** brand name for an MDI with a special "breath-activated" release mechanism; contains pirbuterol (quick relief medicine)

**mcg:** microgram, 1/1,000,000 (one millionth) of a gram

**MDI:** metered dose inhaler

**mean (average) peak flow score:** the average peak flow score for people of a certain height, expressed in liters per minute

**median peak flow score:** the peak flow score at which half of the people of a specific height, gender and age will be able to blow

**mediator:** a chemical that is the middleman or go-between in the asthma reaction

**medicine retaining valve:** valve in the exit port of a holding chamber which holds medicine until a person begins to breathe in

**Medrol:** brand name of methylprednisolone, an oral steroid

**metabolize:** to change chemically or physically in the body

**metered dose inhaler (MDI):** device that creates medicine mist for inhalation by using propellant to expel liquid medicine

**metaproterenol:** generic name for beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist, quick relief medicine

**methylprednisolone:** generic name for Medrol, oral steroid medicine

**methotrexate:** immunosuppressive drug used to treat severe asthma that does not respond to usual treatment; also used to treat cancer

**micron:** micrometer, 1/1,000,000 (one millionth) of a meter

**mg:** milligram, 1/1,000 (one thousandth) of a gram

**mite:** tiny arachnid (spiderlike animal); skeleton and feces found in house dust can cause asthma

**ml:** milliliter, 1/1,000 of a liter; same as a cubic centimeter (cc)

**moniliasis (candidiasis):** yeast infection in the mouth or vagina

**monitoring:** keeping track of

**montelukast:** generic name for Singulair, a leukotriene modifier medicine, controller

**mouthpiece:** part of an asthma device which is put in the mouth

**mucus:** protective and cleansing material produced by glands in the airways, nose, sinuses, and elsewhere in the body

**nebulizer (nebulizer cup):** the small plastic device that converts liquid medicine into a mist for inhalation

**normal (tidal) breath:** usual breathing volume when no extra effort is made

**onset of action:** time span from when a medicine is inhaled or swallowed until it starts to work

**open mouth technique:** effective method for inhaling medicine from a metered dose inhaler

**osteoporosis:** decrease in bone density causing increased bone fragility

**ozone:** a form of oxygen (O<sub>3</sub>) that is a respiratory irritant; one component of smog; see ozone layer

**ozone layer:** layer of ozone in the upper atmosphere which encircles the Earth, protecting the surface from harmful effects of cancer-causing ultraviolet light

**palate:** roof of mouth

**peak expiratory flow rate (PEFR):** speed at which air exits the lungs when you give your fastest blast (a fraction of a second); also known as peak flow

**peak flow meter:** a device used to measure peak expiratory flow rate

**peak flow score:** the best of three attempts blown on the peak flow meter, expressed in liters per minute

**peak flow zone:** one of the treatment zones of asthma management as defined by peak flow scores

**Pediapred:** brand name of prednisolone, an oral steroid

**pediatrician:** primary care physician for children

**persistent asthma:** condition in which a person experiences asthma symptoms two or more times a week (when taking no asthma medicine)

**personal best peak flow score:** highest peak flow score that an individual has blown on two separate days when the airways are completely clear and technique is good

**pirbuterol:** generic name for Maxair; beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist, quick relief medicine

**pollen:** potent allergen shed during a plant's flowering season

**pollutant:** impurity or substance that contaminates the air

**post bronchodilator:** airflow that occurs after inhaling a quick relief medicine

**ppm:** parts per million. Number of molecules of a particular substance (e.g., a pollutant) found in a million molecules of air, water, etc.

**prebronchodilator:** rate of airflow that occurs before inhaling a quick relief medicine

**prednisone:** generic name of oral steroid medicine; many brand names

**prednisolone:** generic name for Prelone and Pediapred; oral steroid medicine

**Prelone:** a brand name for prednisolone, an oral steroid

**prick test:** type of skin test for allergy

**Proventil HFA:** brand name for albuterol; beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist, quick relief medicine with non-CFC propellant in the MDI

**Proventil Repetabs:** brand name for long-acting albuterol preparation; oral

**puffer:** another word for inhaler or MDI

**Pulmicort Turbuhaler:** brand name for a dry powder inhaler containing budesonide; inhaled steroid, controller

**pulmonary function test:** a test or series of tests used to measure various aspects of lung function and capacity

**pulmonologist:** doctor specializing in the care of people with lung diseases

**q.i.d.:** four times per day dosing schedule  
**quick relief medicine:** inhaled medicine that acts to open constricted airways within minutes (e.g., inhaled beta<sub>2</sub>-agonists)  
**QVAR:** brand name for beclomethasone, an inhaled steroid medicine; controller

**rast:** radioimmunosorbent test, an allergy test that measures IgE (antibody) to a specific antigen

**rad:** abbreviation for reactive airway disease, a name for asthma

**red zone:** asthma treatment zone in which symptoms are severe and peak flow is less than 50 percent of personal best; requires immediate treatment

**relative humidity:** amount of water in the air compared to the total amount of water the air can hold at a given temperature

**rescue medicine:** quick relief medicine

**respiratory therapist:** health professional who provides assessment, treatment, and education for people with lung disease

**respirable range:** size of particles that can be inhaled into the small airways (1 to 5 microns in diameter)

**retraction:** “sucking in” of the skin between the ribs or above and below the breast bone

**ROAD:** reversible obstructive airway disease, a term that is sometimes used to describe the asthma condition

**runout time:** length of time it takes for the effect of a medicine to disappear after the last dose; may be minutes, hours, or days

**salmeterol:** generic name for Serevent; inhaled long-acting beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist, controller

**sensitization:** process of becoming sensitized to an allergen

**sensitizer:** allergen or irritant that primes the asthma reaction

**Serevent:** brand name for salmeterol, controller

**serum:** the liquid portion of the blood

**serum level:** the amount of medicine in a quantity of serum

**shake test:** shaking the MDI canister, an unreliable method for determining whether the MDI can deliver a full puff of medicine

**side effect:** undesired or adverse effect of medicine

**sign:** an effect that can be seen or heard by an observer

**Singulair:** brand name for montelukast, a leukotriene modifier medicine, controller

**sinuses:** one of the eight bone-enclosed cavities surrounding the nose

**sinusitis:** inflammation of one or more paranasal (around the nose) sinuses

**small airways:** airways less than 2 mm in diameter; bronchioles

**Space Chamber:** brand of holding chamber

**spacer:** device used with an MDI to improve effectiveness; also known as “holding chamber” or “extender”

**Spinhaler:** brand name for dry-powder device containing cromolyn; controller medicine; no longer available in the U.S.

**spirometer:** device used in a doctor’s office to measure various components of airflow

**spirometry:** the act of using a spirometer

**step down:** method for bringing asthma under control quickly, then gradually decreasing medicines to the lowest effective dose

**steroid burst:** a short treatment with oral steroids, usually lasting for seven days or less

**steroid:** type of hormone produced by the adrenal cortex which has antiinflammatory effects. Also, medicine similar to this hormone that is given by inhalation or orally to help control asthma

**subcutaneous:** under the skin

**sustained-release:** synonymous with long-acting or extended-release; refers to theophylline and beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist preparations

**sympathomimetic:** produces the same effect as epinephrine injection or stimulation of sympathetic nervous system

**symptoms:** any effect on your body that you can feel that is different from usual; for example, a tight chest or shortness of breath

**terbutaline:** generic name for Brethaire, Brethine, Bricanyl; beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist, quick relief medicine

**Theo-24:** brand name for a long-acting theophylline preparation, controller, oral

**Theo-Dur:** brand name for a long-acting theophylline preparation, controller, oral

**theophylline:** slow-acting bronchodilator medicine; controller, oral

**tidal breathing:** normal, relaxed breathing

**toxicity:** quality of being poisonous; the adverse effect(s) of a medicine

**triamcinolone:** generic name for Azmacort, inhaled steroid preparation (controller)

**trigger:** instigator; precipitating factor in causing airway inflammation and asthma symptoms

**twitchy:** overreactive, hyperresponsive; used in reference to airways

**ultrasonic:** sound waves above the range that humans can hear; can cause a medicine solution to turn into a mist.

**ultrasonic nebulizer:** device that uses sound waves to create medicine mist; usually small, light, and portable. It should not be used to deliver a suspension, such as Pulmicort.

**unit dose:** medicine in liquid or pill form that is packaged in individual doses

**Uni-Dur:** brand name for a long-acting theophylline preparation, controller, oral

**Uni-Phyl:** brand name for a long-acting theophylline preparation, controller, oral

**USN:** ultrasonic nebulizer

**valve:** device that regulates the flow of air or other substance

**Vanceril:** brand name for beclomethasone; an inhaled steroid medicine, controller

**vent:** tube that can be uncovered to interrupt the flow of air into a compressor driven nebulizer cup

**Ventolin:** brand name for albuterol, a beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist, quick relief medicine

**voice box:** larynx, part of the upper airways which lies between the throat and the trachea

**wheeze:** high-pitched whistling that occurs when air flows through narrowed airways

**white blood cells:** cells whose main function is to defend the body from bacteria and allergens

**Windmill Trainer:** a feedback device for people who use a MiniWright peak flow meter to improve their ability to blow peak flow

**workup:** evaluation of a patient

**Xopenex:** brand name for levalbuterol, a beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist, quick relief medicine

**zafirlukast:** generic name for Accolate, a leukotriene modifier; controller  
**zone borders:** limits of the asthma treatment zones as defined by peak flow or total score of asthma signs  
**zileuton:** generic name for Zyflo, a leukotriene modifier medicine; controller  
**Zyflo:** brand name for the zileuton, a leukotriene modifier medicine; controller