

# Taking Bronchodilators



Bronchodilators are medicines that help open the airways (bronchi) of your lungs. This lets more air flow through them. These medicines work by relaxing the smooth muscles that line the airways. This makes the airways open wider. It allows air to leave the lungs. These medicines are used to ease breathing problems caused by asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and other lung diseases.

There are two main types of bronchodilators:

- **Short-acting bronchodilators.** These ease symptoms quickly.
- **Long-acting bronchodilators.** These control symptoms over time. They shouldn't be used for quick relief.

Because these medicines are used differently, make sure you know if your medicine is a short- or long-acting bronchodilator. Your provider may prescribe one or both types.

## Know your medicine

Your healthcare provider prescribed a bronchodilator for you. The name of your bronchodilator is

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## Guidelines for use

Follow these guidelines for using a bronchodilator:

- Follow the fact sheet that came with your medicine. It tells you when and how to take your medicine. Ask for a sheet if you didn't get one.
- Take your medicine exactly as directed. Ask your healthcare team if you have any questions about taking your medicine.
- Tell your healthcare provider about any other medicines you are taking. This includes over-the-counter or herbal medicines.
- Don't take a higher dose of this medicine than prescribed. This can lead to serious side effects and even death.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you need to use your quick-relief medicine often. Using too much of the medicine could mean that your condition isn't being controlled well. Your healthcare provider will help find the medicine that is right for you.

## More tips

- Quit smoking. Join a stop-smoking program to help you quit.
- Don't allow anyone to smoke in your home or around you.
- Learn to use a peak flow meter. This device helps you check how well your condition is controlled. It can help you know if you need medical care. Talk with your provider about getting a peak flow meter if you don't have one.
- Lower indoor humidity in your home to less than 50%. Dehumidifiers or air conditioners can help you do this.
- Get recommended vaccines. These include those for the flu, pneumonia, and COVID-19.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a scarf on cold or windy days.

## Possible side effects

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any of these side effects. Don't stop taking the medicine until your healthcare provider tells you to. Mild side effects are:

- Anxiety or nervousness
- Trouble sleeping
- Nausea
- Headache
- Tremor
- Faster heart rate

## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these:

- Trouble breathing
- Feeling that your heart is skipping a beat (palpitations)
- Coughing
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Drowsiness
- Sweating
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Weakness
- A fever of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider

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