Asthma pill provides hope to millions of sufferers and could replace inhaler

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The twice-a-day pill dramatically reduces the severity of attacks and has been hailed as a real 'game changer'

A twice-a-day pill that dramatically reduces the severity of [asthma](http://www.mirror.co.uk/all-about/asthma) attacks has been developed by British scientists.

It is the first new pill for almost twenty years and has been hailed as a real “game changer”, with the potential to revolutionise treatment of the disease.

Within three months asthma became five times less severe in participants taking the medication.

Around 5.4 million Britons have asthma, including 1.1 million children.

Professor Chris Brightling, of the [University of Leicester](http://www.mirror.co.uk/all-about/university-of-leicester), said: “This new drug could be a game changer for future treatment of asthma.”

The pill, called Fevipiprant, is aimed at severe rather than mild sufferers, and is currently being evaluated in late stage clinical trials for efficacy, according to ClinTrials.gov.

Three people die every day because of asthma attacks and research shows that two thirds of asthma deaths are preventable, according to Asthma UK.

Prof Brightling recruited 61 patients, with one group given a 225mg dose twice a day for 12 weeks and the other a placebo.

Both were added to the medications the participants were already taking.

The study published in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine analysed the sputum eosinophil count in the lungs, an inflammation measurement of a white blood cell that rises with the severity of asthma.

People who do not have asthma have a percentage of less than one and those with moderate-to-severe asthma typically have a reading of about five per cent.

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The rate in people with moderate-to-severe asthma taking the medication was reduced from an average of 5.4 per cent to 1.1 per cent over 12 weeks.

It significantly decreased symptoms, boosted lung function, reduced inflammation and repaired the lining of airways.

Prof Brightling, who led the study at the Glenfield Hospital in Leicester.said: “A unique feature of this study was how it included measurements of symptoms, lung function using breathing tests, sampling of the airway wall and CT scans of the chest to give a complete picture of how the new drug works.

“Most treatments might improve some of these features of disease, but with Fevipiprant improvements were seen with all of the types of tests.

“We already know that using treatments to target eosinophilic airway inflammation can substantially reduce asthma attacks.

“This new treatment, Fevipiprant, could likewise help to stop preventable asthma attacks, reduce [hospital](http://www.mirror.co.uk/all-about/hospitals) admissions and improve day-to-day symptoms- making it a ‘game changer’ for future treatment.”