



What you need to know about...

Steroids and Asthma

People with asthma have inflammation (swelling) in their airways. Once an asthma episode starts the swelling can get worse and then you start to make a lot of mucus. Often your healthcare provider will use steroids to help keep our asthma in control. Sometimes they will give you Inhaled corticosteroids sometimes called inhaled steroids to use everyday. These help keep the swelling inside your lungs away so that you do not have symptoms all the time and do not need your reliever medicine as often.

Your healthcare provider will ask questions to see if you need medicine everyday, often called controller medicine. If you answer yes to more than two questions below you should talk with your provider. It could be a sign that you have swelling in your lungs that need treatment.

- Do you need or use your reliever medicine more than two times per week?
- Do you wake up more than two times a week at night from coughing?
- Do you have to limit your activity because of your asthma?
- Do you use more than two reliever inhalers in a year?

Inhaled steroids have been proven very safe and have very few side effects even when used everyday. If your healthcare provider wants you to use this type of medicine it is important to take it everyday as prescribed even when you feel well. You will not feel this medicine work right away. It will not re-

lieve asthma symptoms during an episode, but they will stop you from having as many asthma episodes.

Oral steroids are sometimes needed when you are having an asthma episode or “attack” that is moderate or severe. These usually are a pill or a liquid which you swallow. They act quickly to bring down the swelling. They are very safe when used for a short period of time and are usually prescribed until your asthma gets under control.

If you have concerns about using steroid medicines you need to share these concerns with your healthcare provider. They will be able to discuss all your options with you.