

COPD: Steroids

Steroid (corticosteroid) medicines are one type of medicine used to treat COPD. You may inhale these medicines or take them as a pill.

Inhaled steroids

Inhaled steroid medicines are used with a device (inhaler) that lets you breathe the medicine into your lungs.

Using them may reduce the number of flare-ups, or exacerbations, you have. An exacerbation is when your COPD symptoms get worse over a short time and stay bad.

Regular use of an inhaled steroid when you have COPD can increase your risk of getting pneumonia. If you have questions about inhaled steroids, ask your doctor.

Examples of inhaled steroids include:

- Beclomethasone.
- Budesonide.
- Fluticasone.
- Mometasone.

A corticosteroid medicine and one or two bronchodilator medicines may be combined in one inhaler.

How to use your inhaler

A metered-dose inhaler (MDI) provides a puff of medicine as a liquid mist. A dry powder inhaler delivers a dose of medicine as a powder.

- Read the instructions that come with the inhaler. Inhalers come in different shapes, sizes, and doses. Each kind is used differently.
- Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or respiratory therapist how to use each of your inhalers correctly.



- Make sure you have the correct medicine. If you use several inhalers, put a label on each one so that you know which one to use at the right time.
- Get inhaler refills before you run out.

Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or respiratory therapist if a spacer is right for you. A spacer may help you get more inhaled medicine to your lungs. If you use one, ask how to use it properly.

Side effects of inhaled steroids

Ask your pharmacist about the side effects of each medicine you take. Side effects are also listed in the information that comes with your medicine. Common side effects of these medicines include:

- A sore mouth or sore throat.
- Changes in your voice, such as hoarseness.

- A mouth or throat infection called thrush. Rinsing your mouth after you use your inhaler will help prevent thrush. Do not swallow the rinse.

Oral steroids

Oral steroid medicines are swallowed as pills or a syrup. They are mostly used during a flare-up. An example is prednisone.

Side effects of oral steroids

The side effects that a person has may depend on the steroid dose and how long the medicine

is taken. Side effects like problems sleeping, mood changes, and increases in blood sugar may occur shortly after starting a steroid medicine.

Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.

Call 911 right away if you think you are having a serious reaction, such as trouble breathing.



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