



## Managing Asthma Medication Side Effects

To manage your asthma, your doctor may prescribe medication. There are several types of medications that treat asthma. This includes long-term medications and rescue medications. Long-term medications are taken on a schedule and control asthma on a day-to-day basis. Rescue medications are to be used in the event of an asthma attack. Always follow your asthma plan as directed by your doctor.

The following are common asthma medication side effects with tips on how to best manage them. Please note, medications can affect each patient differently.



### Headaches

Headaches may result from asthma medications. Some over-the-counter medications can help relieve headaches. Be sure to check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any over-the-counter pain relievers to learn which ones are best for you

- ▶ Drink plenty of water, unless your doctor has limited how much you can have.
- ▶ Limit caffeine.
- ▶ Keep the lights dim and avoid loud noises and strong smells to reduce the intensity of a headache. Rest and try to relax until the headache goes away.
- ▶ Seek medical attention if you experience severe or persistent headaches, especially if they are accompanied by fever, vision changes, nausea, vomiting or stiffness in your neck.

### Muscle Pain

Your asthma medication may cause new or worsening muscle pain. If you begin having muscle pain, speak with your doctor to determine the cause.



## Injection Site Reaction

If your medication is injected, you may experience a mild injection site reaction. This can be mild swelling, redness, itching and/or pain at the injection site. If your injection is given by your doctor, he or she may monitor you for a short time after your injection to make sure you don't have a reaction. If you experience fainting, dizziness, hives, breathing problems, rash or swelling of the face, mouth and tongue, tell your doctor right away.

## Fatigue

Your asthma medication may cause fatigue. Fatigue is a lack of energy that lasts all day and is not helped by sleeping or naps. Tired legs and eyes, stiff shoulders, a lack of focus, feeling crabby, a lack of motivation, trouble sleeping, exhaustion and anxiety are potential signs of fatigue.

- ▶ Balance rest and activity schedules throughout the day.
- ▶ Avoid coffee, tea, chocolate and tobacco during the evening hours.
- ▶ Plan to do your most demanding activities during the time of day when you have the most energy.
- ▶ Talk with your doctor about how to safely exercise with your asthma. Doing something you enjoy is key for long-term results. Below are some options that may be included in a workout plan discussed with your doctor.
  - Walking
  - Biking
  - Tai Chi
  - Dancing
  - Swimming
  - Gardening
  - Yoga
  - Low impact aerobics

## Weakened Immune System

Some asthma medications may weaken your immune system. This increases your risk for infection. Ask your doctor or pharmacist whether or not you should be taking extra steps to avoid this side effect.



Rinse your mouth with water and spit after using an inhaled medication containing a steroid. This reduces the risk of an infection of the mouth called thrush.



Get enough sleep—the average adult needs between seven and nine hours each night.



Eat a balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables and whole grains.



Ask your doctor how you can exercise safely with your asthma.



Frequently wash your hands and use hand sanitizer. Hand washing is one of the best ways to reduce exposure to germs and lower the risk of infection.



Don't use tobacco products.

# FAQs

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## ***What is asthma?***

Asthma is a long-term disease that inflames and narrows the airways of the lungs. Asthma may cause the linings of your airways to become swollen, in addition to causing the muscles around them to become tight. Sometimes the swelling and tightness can feel intense and make it hard to breathe. When the feeling of tightness or trouble breathing occurs it is called an asthma attack. Because asthma attacks can be serious, it's important to work with your doctor on controlling your asthma.

## ***What are the symptoms of asthma?***

Each person may have different asthma symptoms. Symptoms can vary in frequency and intensity. Common symptoms of asthma include:

- Wheezing
- Coughing
- Chest tightness
- Shortness of breath

## ***How can I manage my asthma?***

To manage your asthma, your doctor may prescribe medication. It's very important to take your medication as directed and limit the number of missed doses in order to control your asthma.

## ***How is asthma treated?***

There are several types of medications that treat asthma. This includes long-term medications and rescue medications. Long-term medications are taken on a schedule and control asthma on a day-to-day basis. Rescue medications are to be used in the event of an asthma attack. Always follow your asthma plan as directed by your doctor.

Knowing what triggers your asthma can also help you manage it. Triggers range for each person and can include poor air quality, stress, the common cold, food sensitivities, exercise or the weather. Indoor and outdoor allergens can also trigger asthma. This includes pet dander, dust mites, tree pollens, grass pollens, weed pollens and more. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the best ways to avoid your triggers.

## ***How do I manage side effects of treatment?***

Depending on the medication your doctor prescribes, you may experience side effects. Medication can affect each patient differently. Amber Specialty Pharmacy works with patients to help manage any side effects that occur. It's important to discuss any side effects that you experience with your pharmacist or doctor.





## Amber Specialty Pharmacy is here to help.

We offer guidance and support through our dedicated team of healthcare experts. From the beginning, we help you with the enrollment process and review your insurance coverage. We explore financial assistance opportunities to help you lower your medication costs whenever possible. Our pharmacists review your prescriptions with you - including how to take your medication and manage any side effects. Pharmacists are available 24/7 to assist you when you have questions. Our Registered Nurse and Registered Dietitian offer personalized consultations to assist you with any medically-based questions and nutritional care. We stay in touch with you regularly to remind you when it is time to refill your prescriptions. We are always here to help.

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