Albuterol

Albuterol is a medicine that is used to treat asthma or exercise-induced asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema, and many other lung conditions. It is a type of medicine called a bronchodilator. A bronchodilator works to relax the airways of the lungs.

Lung conditions that cause bronchospasms, like asthma, are often treated with medicines that are fast-acting. The medicine is taken as needed to prevent or ease the spasms of the airways. You may hear your doctor or therapist call albuterol a rescue medicine.

How to Take Albuterol Medicines

Your health care provider can give you albuterol in different ways to help you breathe easier:

Nebulizer
This is a liquid form of medicine that is put into a machine called a nebulizer. The machine turns the liquid into steam that you breathe in through the mouth for about 10 minutes. It works quickly to reduce bronchospasm or tightness in the lungs to improve breathing.

Metered Dose Inhaler
This is a spray form of medicine that is put into an inhaler. The medicine in the canister is released in a specific dose. You get the medicine by pushing on the canister in the inhaler, called a spray MDI. Some inhalers work by breathing it in through the inhaler. This is called a breath MDI. Both deliver the medicine you need.

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What You Need to Know

- Store albuterol in a cool, dry place out of light. Take the medicine as directed. If you take albuterol as a rescue medicine, keep it with you at all times.

- If you need to take more medicine to help with breathing than has been prescribed, contact your health care provider. A different medicine may be needed.

- Tell your doctor or health care provider if you have any of these conditions. There may be reasons to not use albuterol medicines:
  - Heart disease or high blood pressure
  - Allergy to albuterol, levalbuterol, sulfites, preservatives or dyes. Your health care provider may talk with you about other medicines for breathing.
  - History of seizures
  - Diabetes. Albuterol can raise blood glucose levels.

Side Effects

Some of the common side effects of albuterol are:

- Feel nervous or shaky
- Headache
- Dry mouth or throat
- Cough or sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sleeping problems

* Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.