

Other languages

This leaflet can be produced in other languages on request. We can also provide the information in other formats including Braille, large print, and audio CD. Please contact us if you require help.

Compliments and complaints

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a confidential NHS service that provides help, advice and information for patients, families, and carers. We welcome all your feedback about the service.

Contact PALS at:

- **Email:** pals@mft.nhs.uk
- **Telephone:** 0161 276 8686

Who provides this service?

The Children's Asthma Service is provided by Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO). MLCO is the organisation that provides NHS community health and adult social care services in the city.

Find out more about MLCO at
www.manchesterlco.org

Contacting us

Children's Asthma Nursing Service

Longsight Health Centre
Stockport Road
Longsight
Manchester
M13 0RR

Telephone: 0161 529 6638

**Our service is open Monday to Friday,
from 8:00am to 6:00pm (excluding
Bank Holidays).**

For more information on how we can help, as well as a range of support materials, please visit our service page on the MLCO website:

www.manchesterlco.org/childrens-asthma-service

Other useful contacts

Asthma UK Adviceline

- **Telephone:** 0300 222 5800
- **Website:** www.asthmaandlung.org.uk

Allergy UK

- **Telephone:** 0300 222 5800
- **Website:** www.asthmaandlung.org.uk

Asthma and steroids

Patient and carer information

Children's Asthma Service



About asthma and steroids

Steroids are the most effective way of controlling inflammation in the lungs. This causes them to become red and sore.

Steroids used in asthma are corticosteroids. These are naturally made in our bodies by the adrenal gland. When you use a steroid inhaler or steroid tablets, you add to this natural corticosteroid.

Steroids used to treat asthma are taken in two main ways:

- Steroid inhalers (preventers)
- Steroid tablets (prednisolone)

Steroid inhalers

A GP or other health care professional should prescribe a steroid inhaler if you:

- Are breathless, cough or have a tight chest during everyday activities more than 2-3 times a week
- Need to use your reliever inhaler more than once a day
- Have sleep disturbed by cough or chest tightness each week



An example of a steroid inhaler (preventer)

How steroid inhalers work

As the protective effect of the steroid builds up, you will be less likely to have asthma attacks. You will also feel less breathless during the day and night and not need to use your reliever inhaler as often.

Steroid inhalers:

- Give low doses straight to the airways.
- Need to be taken every day, even if you are feeling well, to build up their protective effect.
- Don't give immediate or quick relief when you are breathless. They help to reduce long-term inflammation.
- Are usually brown, red or orange inhalers.

Safety and side effects

Steroid inhalers are safe and have a low risk of side effects. But, there is a small chance of getting a sore throat, hoarse voice, or a mouth infection (thrush).

To help prevent this, brush your teeth and rinse your mouth after using your inhaler.

Using inhaled steroids will not cause you to gain weight or develop muscle.

Steroid tablets

Short courses of steroid tablets are essential emergency treatment in sudden acute attacks, not controlled by preventer and reliever inhalers.

Steroid tablets:

- Give large doses to reduce inflammation quickly within a few hours.
- Are usually given as short courses, usually for 3-5 days, to control asthma attacks.

If you finish a course of steroid tablets but are not back to normal, you should visit your doctor.

Steroid tablets may increase your appetite and lead to weight gain.

Any weight gain in response to steroid tablets is usually temporary.