

Don't Jump to Airsupra for Asthma Rescue

Reps will tout albuterol/budesonide (*Airsupra*) as the first “dual-action” rescue inhaler FDA-approved for asthma in adults.

We're used to reaching for albuterol for quick relief.

But this new short-acting beta-agonist/inhaled corticosteroid (ICS) combo aligns with guidelines moving toward anti-inflammatory reliever (AIR) options...instead of using albuterol alone.

That's because a fast-acting beta-agonist (albuterol, formoterol) WITH an ICS for rescue also reduces asthma exacerbations. And overuse of albuterol alone can increase exacerbation risk.

Keep in mind, both albuterol and formoterol work within 5 minutes...and albuterol lasts up to 6 hours, but formoterol up to 12 hours.

Don't jump to prn albuterol/budesonide for quick relief.

There's no proof it's more effective than prn long-acting beta-agonist formoterol/ICS combos (*Symbicort*, *Dulera*). And these can be used for maintenance and reliever therapy (MART), previously called SMART.

Plus albuterol/budesonide costs about \$475/inhaler. Anticipate payer rejects.

Prescribe a formoterol/ICS combo for most adults and adolescents...so patients can use one inhaler for rescue...and maintenance, if needed.

Formoterol/budesonide (*Symbicort*) costs about \$200/inhaler...and formoterol/mometasone (*Dulera*) about \$300.

Start a low-dose formoterol/ICS combo prn as a reliever for mild asthma. If symptoms worsen or if patients have more severe asthma, step up to formoterol/ICS bid as a maintenance med AND prn for rescue...instead of adding another inhaler.

Be aware, some payers may prefer using albuterol plus an ICS separately before authorizing albuterol/budesonide. For example, generic albuterol costs about \$30/inhaler...and mometasone (*Asmanex*) around \$100.

This aligns with guidelines that recommend prn albuterol with an ICS...OR prn albuterol...as alternative rescue options to MART.

Continue to assess adherence...reinforce proper inhaler technique...and ensure patients have an asthma action plan.

See how inhalers stack up in our resource, *Comparison of Asthma Medications*. Dig into our resource, *Improving Asthma Care*, for how to treat asthma in kids, preventive measures, and patient education.

Key References:

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