

COPD Medications

Types of Medications		How they work	Possible Side Effects & Special Precautions
Bronchodilators Fast-acting beta-2 agonists		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Relax & open airways * Increase movement of cilia to help clear mucus * Help prevent exercise induced wheezing * Help stop attacks 	Trembling, Nervousness, insomnia, fast heartbeat, or increased blood pressure. Should be taken before other bronchodilators & inhaled corticosteroids.
ProAir Ventolin Proventil	Albuterol Xopenex AccuNeb (<i>nebulizer</i>)		
Long-acting beta-2 agonists		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Relax & open airways * Take effect more slowly & work longer * Increase movement of cilia to help clear mucus * Help prevent exercise induced wheezing 	Fast heartbeat, headache, nervousness, or trembling. Do NOT use for quick relief. Do NOT take more often than prescribed.
Serevent Foradil Arcapta	Performist (<i>nebulizer</i>) Brovana (<i>nebulizer</i>)		
Anticholinergics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Relax & open airways * Take effect more slowly than fast-acting beta-2 agonists 	Nervousness, dizziness, drowsiness, headache, upset stomach, constipation, or dry mouth.
Atrovent Spiriva	Tudorza		
Methylxanthines		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Stimulate the diaphragm & breathing. * May be useful if symptoms occur during sleep. * Are long-acting 	Headache, nervousness, insomnia, irregular heartbeat, diarrhea, or nausea. Can interact with other medications. Blood levels must be monitored regularly. Limit caffeine intake.
Theophylline			
Corticosteroids (these are not the same as the anabolic steroids used by some bodybuilders.)		inhaled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reduce inflammation & swelling airways * Reduce mucus production * Decrease sensitivity of airways to irritants & allergens. 	inhaled Very little enters bloodstream, so few side effects. Do not use for fast relief of shortness of breath. Must be used every day; rinse mouth & spit after use. Do not stop using without consulting your doctor. High doses must be tapered, not stopped abruptly.
Flovent Qvar	Pulmicort (<i>nebulizer</i>)		
Asmanex Alvesco		swallowed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reduce inflammation & swelling airways * Reduce mucus production * Decrease sensitivity of airways to irritants & allergens. 	swallowed: Enters bloodstream, so may cause insomnia, mood changes, skin bruising, weight gain, stomach problems, high blood pressure, glaucoma, cataracts, osteoporosis, or high blood sugar. Always take with food or milk. Do not stop using without consulting your doctor. High doses must be tapered, not stopped abruptly.
Combination Medications		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Combine effects of different types of medications 	Varies depending on the medication. Talk to your healthcare provider.
Combivent Symbicort	Advair Duoneb (<i>nebulizer</i>) Dulera		

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Additional Medications Frequently used by Pulmonary patients.

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Antibiotics Levofloxacin Augmentin Bactrim Ciprofloxacin Avelox Zithromax	Antibiotics are used to kill the bacteria that cause a number of different infections such as pneumonia & bronchitis.	Upset stomach, diarrhea, nausea. Stop the medication and call your doctor immediately if you experience rash, itching or hives.
Diuretics (water pills) Lasix Bumex Hydrochlorothiazide	Diuretics rid the body of excess fluid (water) by increasing the flow of urine. This prevents excess fluid from backing up into the lungs and making breathing difficult.	Frequent urination, excessive thirst, muscle weakness, leg cramps, (food high in potassium may help to prevent some side effects of diuretics. Consult your doctor first.)
Potassium supplements K-Dur Klor-con K-Lor	Potassium supplements replace the potassium lost with the use of diuretics & corticosteroids, keeping the lungs, heart and other muscles working properly.	Stomach pain, nausea, muscle weakness, leg cramps, fatigue (low levels), high levels: confusion, muscle tightness, cold, tingling (levels must be monitored).