

## Understanding Your Medication

Your doctor may have prescribed one or more medications to help you manage your COPD. Sometimes you may be instructed to take more than one medication because the medicines work together to help control your symptoms. For example, medicines, when taken as part of the treatment plan from your doctor, can:

- reduce your symptoms such as shortness of breath,
- enable you to exercise more, be more active and do more things you like to do,
- help to prevent potential flare-ups from occurring

There are medicines that, when taken, open up the airways in your lungs by relaxing the muscle around the airways. These are called bronchodilators and some of them work quickly and others work over 12 or even 24 hours.

There are other medications that work to treat the inflammation (swelling) inside the airways in your lungs. These are called corticosteroids.

The chart below outlines the most commonly prescribed medicines used to treat COPD and what the medicines do for your lungs.

### Medications Commonly Used for the Treatment of COPD

Medication Name	Drug Type	Important Information
Albuterol (Proventil and Ventolin)	Fast Acting Bronchodilator	Fast acting: use this to relieve symptoms quickly by helping to open the airways.
Atrovent or Ipratropium (generic)	Fast Acting Bronchodilator	Fast acting: this also helps to open up your airways quickly
Spiriva	Long Acting Bronchodilator	Works for 24 hours to help you breathe better by keeping your airways open.
Serevent	Long Acting Bronchodilator	Works for 12 hours. Not recommended to treat an asthma attack that has already begun. It will not work fast enough to reverse your symptoms. Serevent is used as a preventive to keep your airways open. Take as prescribed by your physician.
Foradil	Long Acting Bronchodilator	Works for 12 hours. Not recommended to treat an asthma attack that has already begun. It will not work fast enough to reverse your symptoms. Foradil is used as a preventive to keep your airways open. Take as prescribed by your doctor.
Combivent and Duoneb	Combination Bronchodilator	Combination of albuterol and atrovent. Fast acting medicine to help open your airways to help you breathe better. Works for 4-6 hours.
Advair	Combination Bronchodilator/Anti-Inflammatory	Helps to keep your airways open, and decrease any swelling you may have, to help you breathe better. Remember to rinse out your mouth afterwards to prevent thrush.

		Take as prescribed by your doctor.
Flovent	Anti-inflammatory	Decreases any swelling in the airways. You need to rinse out your mouth after using to prevent thrush.
Asmanex	Anti-inflammatory	Decreases any swelling in the airways. You need to rinse out your mouth after using to prevent thrush.
Pulmicort	Anti-inflammatory	Decreases any swelling in the airways. You need to rinse out your mouth after using to prevent thrush.

***The most important aspect of COPD treatment is to develop a plan with your doctor and then stick to that plan.*** If your doctor prescribes medicine to help you breathe, it is very important that you take your medications as directed and continue to take the medications even if you are feeling better. You should never change your dosage or stop taking medication without discussing it with your doctor.