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Home > Drugs A to Z > A > Al > Albuterol Consumer Information

Albuterol

Generic Name: albuterol inhalation (al BYOO ter all)
Brand names: Accuneb, ProAir HFA, Proventil, Proventil HFA, Ventolin HFA

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What is albuterol?

Albuterol is a bronchodilator that relaxes muscles in the airways and increases air flow to the lungs.

Albuterol is used to treat or prevent bronchospasm in people with reversible obstructive airway disease. Albuterol is also used to prevent exercise-induced bronchospasm.

Albuterol may also be used for other purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Important information about albuterol?

It is important to keep Albuterol on hand at all times. Get your prescription refilled before you run out of medicine completely. Keep using all of your other medications as prescribed by your doctor.

Call your doctor right away if you feel that albuterol is not working as well as usual, or if it makes your condition worse. If it seems like you need to use more of any of your medications in a 24-hour period, talk with your doctor.

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Approval History
Drug history at FDA



Pregnancy Category
Risk cannot be ruled out



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Seek emergency medical attention if you think you have used too much of this medicine. An overdose of albuterol can be fatal. Extreme heat can cause the medicine canister to burst. Do not store your inhaler in your [car](#) on hot days. Do not throw an empty canister into open flame.

Before using albuterol

You should not use this medication if you are allergic to albuterol.

If you have certain conditions, you may need a dose adjustment or special tests to safely use this medication.

Before using albuterol, tell your doctor if you have:

- heart disease, high blood pressure, or [congestive heart](#) failure;
- a heart rhythm disorder;
- a [seizure disorder](#) such as epilepsy;
- diabetes; or
- overactive thyroid.

If you have any of these conditions, you may not be able to use albuterol, or you may need a dose adjustment or special tests during treatment.

FDA pregnancy category C. This medication may be harmful to an unborn baby. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to [become pregnant](#) during treatment. It is not known whether albuterol passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. Do not use Albuterol without telling your doctor if you are breast-feeding a baby.

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How should I use albuterol?

Use Albuterol exactly as it was prescribed for you. Do not use the medication in larger amounts, or use it for longer than recommended by your doctor. Follow the instructions on your prescription label.

Albuterol may increase the risk of asthma-related death. Use only the prescribed dose of this medicine and follow all patient instructions for safe use. Talk with your doctor about your individual risks and benefits of using albuterol.

When using the [inhaler](#) device for the first time, prime it by spraying 4 test sprays into the air, away from your face. Shake well before priming. Also prime the inhaler if you have not used it for 2 weeks or longer, or if you have dropped the inhaler.

The instructions below are for standard use of albuterol inhaler and nebulizer devices. Your doctor may want you to use your device differently. Use only the inhaler device provided with your medicine or you may not get the correct dose.

To use the inhaler:

- Shake the canister well just before each spray.
- Uncap the mouthpiece of the albuterol inhaler. Breathe out fully. Put the mouthpiece into your [mouth](#) and close your lips. Breathe in slowly while pushing down on the canister. Hold your breath for 10 seconds, then breathe out slowly.

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- If you use more than one inhalation at a time, wait at least 1 minute before using the second inhalation and shake the inhaler again.
- Keep your albuterol inhaler clean and dry, and store it with the cap on the mouthpiece. Clean your inhaler once a week by removing the canister and placing the mouthpiece under warm running water for at least 30 seconds. Shake out the excess water and allow the parts to air dry completely before putting the inhaler back together.

[albuterol support group](#) to connect with others who have similar interests.

To use the solution with a nebulizer:

- Measure the correct amount of medicine using the dropper provided, or use the proper number of ampules. Place the liquid into the medication chamber of the nebulizer.
- Attach the mouthpiece or face mask to the drug chamber. Then, attach the drug chamber to the compressor. Sit upright and place the mouthpiece into your mouth, or cover your nose and mouth with the face mask. Breathe slowly and evenly until you have inhaled all of the medicine (usually 5 to 15 minutes). The treatment is complete when the drug chamber is empty.
- Clean the nebulizer after each use. Follow the cleaning directions that came with your nebulizer.

Call your doctor right away if you feel that albuterol is not working as well as usual, or if it makes your condition worse. If it seems like you need to use more of any of your medications in a 24-hour period, talk with your doctor.

It is important to keep Albuterol on hand at all times. Get your prescription refilled before you run out of medicine completely. Keep using all of your other medications as prescribed by your doctor.

Store Albuterol at room temperature away from [moisture](#) and heat. Extreme heat can cause the medicine canister to burst. Do not store it in your car on hot days. Do not throw an empty canister into open flame.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Use the medication as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and use the medicine at the next regularly scheduled time. Do not use extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency [medical attention](#) if you think you have used too much of this medicine. An overdose of albuterol can be fatal. Overdose symptoms may include nervousness, headache, tremor, dry mouth, chest pain or heavy feeling, rapid or uneven heart rate, pain spreading to the arm or shoulder, nausea, sweating, dizziness, seizure (convulsions), feeling light-headed or fainting.

What should I avoid while using albuterol?

Avoid getting Albuterol in your eyes. If this does happen, rinse the eyes with water and seek medical attention.

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albuterol side effects

Stop using Albuterol and get emergency medical help if you have any of these signs of an allergic reaction: hives; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat. Call your doctor at once if you have a serious side effect such as:

- bronchospasm (wheezing, chest tightness, [trouble breathing](#)), especially after starting a new canister of this medicine;
- chest pain and fast, pounding, or uneven heart beats;
- tremor, nervousness;
- low potassium (confusion, uneven heart rate, extreme thirst, increased urination, leg discomfort, muscle weakness or limp feeling); or
- dangerously high blood pressure (severe headache, blurred [vision](#), buzzing in your ears, anxiety, confusion, chest pain, shortness of breath, uneven heartbeats, seizure).

Less serious albuterol side effects may include:

- headache, dizziness, nervousness;
- sleep problems (insomnia);
- cough, hoarseness, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose;
- dry mouth and throat;
- muscle pain; or
- diarrhea.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Tell your doctor about any unusual or bothersome side effect. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

See also: [Albuterol side effects](#) (in more detail)

What other drugs will affect albuterol?

Before using Albuterol, tell your doctor if you are taking any of the following medicines:

- a diuretic (water pill);
- digoxin (digitalis, Lanoxin);
- a beta-blocker such as atenolol (Tenormin), metoprolol (Lopressor), propranolol (Inderal), and others;
- an antidepressant such as amitriptyline (Elavil, Etrafon), doxepin (Sinequan), imipramine (Janimine, Tofranil), nortriptyline (Pamelor), and others;
- a MAO inhibitor such as isocarboxazid (Marplan), phenelzine (Nardil), rasagiline (Azilect), selegiline (Eldepryl, Emsam), or tranylcypromine (Parnate); or
- other bronchodilators such as levalbuterol (Xopenex), bitolterol (Tornalate), pirbuterol (Maxair), terbutaline (Brethine, Bricanyl), salmeterol (Serevent), isoetharine (Bronkometer), metaproterenol (Alupent, Metaprel), or isoproterenol (Isuprel Mistometer).

This list is not complete and there may be other drugs that can interact with albuterol. Tell your doctor about all the prescription and over-the-counter medications you use. This includes [vitamins](#), minerals, herbal products, and drugs prescribed by other doctors. Do not start using a new medication without telling your doctor.

More Albuterol resources

- [Albuterol Side Effects](#) (in more detail)
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- Your pharmacist can provide more information about albuterol.

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