



Help Your Patients Make a Smooth Transition to HFA Albuterol Inhalers

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has mandated the removal of the exemption granted to chlorofluorocarbon-based (CFC) metered-dose albuterol inhalers, and the transition to environmentally-friendly hydrofluoroalkane-based (HFA) albuterol inhalers by December 31, 2008.

During this important transition, the supply of CFC-based asthma inhalers will gradually decline, while supplies of HFA-based inhalers are expected to increase. It's important to talk to your patients now about transitioning to HFA inhaler alternatives early so they can successfully make the switch.

Your asthma patients' next appointment is an opportunity to discuss the switch to a safe and effective HFA quick-relief albuterol inhaler. The following is a guide for talking with patients about the transition and financial assistance programs for those patients that qualify. This discussion is also an opportunity to remind your patients about overall asthma management topics, including the proper role of quick-relief inhalers in asthma treatment.



Talk With Your Asthma Patients

CFC to HFA Transition: Why Your Patients Should Transition Now

There are a number of reasons why now is a good time to make this transition:

- CFC-based inhalers are harmful to the environment.
- CFC quick-relief albuterol inhalers will not be available after December 31, 2008.
- HFA quick-relief albuterol inhalers are currently available and are the same medicine as the CFC-based version.

During this transition, manufacturers will gradually reduce their supply of CFC-based quick-relief asthma inhalers and increase supplies of HFA-based quick-relief inhalers.



FPO

HFA quick-relief albuterol inhaler manufacturers have assistance programs for patients with financial need to successfully make the transition.

Making the transition to an HFA-based quick-relief albuterol inhaler is a good opportunity to review your overall asthma management plan.

About HFA Albuterol Inhalers

HFA quick-relief albuterol inhalers are FDA-approved and are safe and effective alternatives to CFC quick-relief albuterol inhalers.

HFA quick-relief inhalers differ from CFC inhalers, specifically in taste and spray force. For example, the sensation of the HFA spray will be less forceful than what patients might be accustomed to with the CFC inhalers. Additionally, HFA inhalers must be cleaned in a specific way. Cleaning information can be found in the package insert.

Environmental Impact of CFCs

CFCs are man-made hydrocarbons used for decades in products such as refrigerants, foams, solvents, fire extinguishers, and aerosol propellants.

Since 1978, CFCs have been removed from almost every product because of the harmful effects CFCs have on the environment by destroying the Earth's protective ozone layer.

The transition from CFC to HFA quick-relief albuterol inhalers is a necessary step to protect the environment. HFA quick-relief albuterol inhalers are as effective and safe as CFC quick-relief inhalers, but are environmentally friendly.

Asthma Management

Quick-relief albuterol inhalers work by relaxing the muscles in the airways, but are not intended to treat asthma inflammation.

If patients are using their quick-relief albuterol inhaler more than twice a week, it may be a good time to discuss asthma management, including the potential need for a long-term maintenance medication such as an inhaled corticosteroid.

Each visit with your patients is an opportunity to review strategies to avoid asthma triggers.

It is critical that patients inform doctors immediately if they experience any problems with their HFA quick-relief albuterol inhaler.

HFA Inhaler Cost and Assistance Programs

If your patients currently have prescription drug coverage through their employer or through Medicare or Medicaid, they will need to confirm the copay that applies to the HFA quick-relief albuterol inhaler.

Patients in need of financial assistance should contact the The Partnership for Prescription Assistance at 1-888-477-2669 or visit www.pparx.org.

Resources

Patients and physicians needing further information on making the transition to HFA quick-relief albuterol inhalers should contact the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America at 1-800-7-ASTHMA or visit www.transitionnow.org for more information and links to other resources.

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