As with all medications there are a number of asthma medication side effects that you need to be aware of. While asthma medication side effects prevent some people from actually taking their medication, asthma medications are generally well tolerated. However, knowing your asthma medication side effects is an important part of caring for your asthma. Asthma medication side effects can often be prevented, but it is equally important to know which asthma medication side effects you need to emergently seek care for and which ones you can monitor at home.

Asthma Medication Side Effects - Inhaled Corticosteroids

Asthma medication side effects for inhaled corticosteroids occur as:

- Local adverse effects (in only one area of the body)
- Systemic effects (throughout the body)

Inhaled Corticosteroids - Local Side Effects

While local side effects can be annoying and bothersome, they are generally not serious. More importantly, there are simple steps you can take to prevent these local side effects:

Inhaled Corticosteroids - Systemic Side Effects

While uncommon, a number of systemic effects can occur with inhaled corticosteroids. Generally, there is a higher risk with increasing doses of inhaled corticosteroids. Potential asthma medication side effects with inhaled steroids include:

Asthma Medication Side Effects - Short Acting Beta Agonists (SABA)

While albuterol side effects will not be experienced by most patients using albuterol and other relief medicines, being knowledgeable of common and serious albuterol side effects is an important skill.

Additionally, overusing your rescue inhaler is a sign of poor asthma control. If you
are overusing your asthma inhaler, you need to speak to your physician about adjusting your asthma action plan.

**Asthma Medication Side Effects-Long Acting Beta Agonists (LABA)**

The side effects of LABAs are similar to those for the SABAs. However, there have been concerns regarding the possibility that LABA treatment increases severity of asthma exacerbations and risk of fatal asthma episodes.

These concerns have resulted in a black box warning from the FDA. Even though a LABA may decrease the frequency of asthma episodes and severity of symptoms, a LABA may make asthma episodes more severe when they occur. You should never be using a LABA alone to control your asthma. Make sure you discuss any concerns that you may have with your asthma care provider.

**Asthma Medication Side Effects- Oral Steroids Like Prednisone**

If you require treatment with oral steroids two or more times per year, your asthma is not well controlled and you should discuss with your asthma care provider. The longer you need oral steroids and the larger dose required to get your asthma under control puts you at greater risk for side effects. Side effects are similar to the systemic side effects noted for inhaled steroids above.

**Asthma Medication Side Effects- Montelukast and Other Leukotriene Modifiers**

Singulair (montelukast) and other leukotriene modifiers are generally well tolerated, but you should be aware of potential side effects include:

Additionally, Singulair (montelukast) and other leukotriene modifiers have changed their labeling to make providers and parents aware of potential mental health side effects noted with this class of drugs. It is very important to discuss any mental health side effects with your asthma care provider so the two of you can decide how to best manage these side effects.

**Asthma Medication Side Effects- Cromolyn Sodium and Nedocromil**

Cromolyn and nedocromil are considered alternative treatments for patients with mild persistent asthma and can be used to prevent symptoms if you know you will
have an allergen exposure and use the medication beforehand.

Cromolyn sodium and nedocromil are generally well tolerated with most side effects decreasing with continued use. Make sure to tell your doctor if side effects do not resolve or become bothersome. Side effects include:

Make sure to notify your doctor promptly if you experience:

- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing

**Asthma Medication Side Effects - Xolair**

Xolair, one of the immunomodulators, is given as an injection. As a result, you may experience pain or swelling at the injection site. Other common side effects include:

There are 2 serious potential side effects you need to be aware of and discuss with your physician:

- **Anaphylaxis**: A very small (0.2%) number of patients taking Xolair injections may experience this potentially life threatening condition. Symptoms of anaphylaxis may include:
  - Sudden onset of asthma like symptoms such as wheezing, cough, shortness of breath, or trouble breathing.
  - Feeling dizzy or faint
  - Hives
  - Changes in your voice, swelling of the tongue, or difficulty swallowing

  These symptoms are a medical emergency and you should seek medical care right away.

- **Cancer**: For unknown reasons, there was a small increase in risk of cancer among patients using Xolair compare to placebo in clinical trials (0.5% versus 0.2%). There was not any single predominate type of cancer noted. If this is concerning to you, be sure to discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor before starting treatment.

**In Summary**

All medications have risks and side effects that you and your doctor need to consider before starting a new asthma medication or if your symptoms worsen.
Asthma medication side effects can be serious, but most are relatively minor or can be prevented. Be sure you know when you need to call your doctor about asthma medication side effects and when your symptoms can be monitored.

Sources:


Excerpted from Asthma Medication Side Effects - What You Need to Know About Asthma Medication Side Effects

http://asthma.about.com/od/asthmabasics/a/art_MED_SE.htm