



Drug FAQs for members

FAQs = Frequently asked Questions

Anti-Inflammatory Inhalers for Asthma QVAR™ and Azmacort®

Introduction

- Anti-inflammatory inhalers or “Preventers” are the most effective medications for managing chronic asthma. They are used everyday to prevent or reduce asthma symptoms.
- Examples of anti-inflammatory inhalers include Azmacort® (triamcinolone) and QVAR™ (beclomethasone).

What is QVAR™?

- QVAR™ is new type of inhaler containing beclomethasone, a medication with a 20-year history of safety and effectiveness. It is prescribed for people aged 12 and older.
- QVAR™ is an aerosol that does not contain a chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) propellant. It is considered to be safe for the environment (CFC propellants are thought to be harmful to the ozone layer).
- All CFC-containing inhalers will eventually be phased out of use in the United States and throughout the world.

What is the current formulary status of QVAR™?

- QVAR™ is currently on the Formulary and will replace Azmacort® as the preferred anti-inflammatory inhaler. Azmacort® will be removed from the Formulary in the near future.

How do QVAR™ and Azmacort® compare?

- Studies have shown both QVAR™ and Azmacort® to be safe and effective drugs for the treatment of asthma for patients 12 years of age and older.
- Neither QVAR™ nor Azmacort® appear to interact with other drugs.
- Both QVAR™ and Azmacort® have a low incidence of side effects.
- The medication in QVAR™ is made in such a way (in small sized particles) that it penetrates well into the airways of the lung.

How is Qvar™ taken?

- QVAR™ is usually taken twice daily – in the morning and evening.

Do I need to use a spacer with QVAR™?

- Spacers are used to help inhaled medication to get into the lungs, to reduce side effects, and to make inhalers easier for some people to use. Because QVAR's™ medication penetrates well into the lungs, it does not come with a spacer. However, if you are already using a spacer with your inhalers, please continue to do so.

How should QVAR™ be taken?

- Follow the directions on your prescription label. They may be different from before.
- Finish your supply of Azmacort® first before beginning QVAR™ therapy. **Do not begin QVAR™ therapy before your Azmacort® supply is gone.**
- If you are currently using a spacer, continue to do so with QVAR™.
- QVAR™ is **not** a bronchodilator (reliever) and should not be used to relieve acute asthma attacks.
- Anti-inflammatory inhalers like QVAR™, should be used daily to prevent attacks.
- As with Azmacort®, rinse your mouth with water (and spit out) after each dose of QVAR™.
- QVAR™ has a **softer feel** and different taste than the CFC-containing inhalers.
- If you have further questions or concerns, please discuss these with your pharmacist or doctor.