



TPMG

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.