

FDA Announces Removal of Asthma Drugs

Dr. Bob Lanier, ACAAI Executive Medical Director, and I attended a conference call today conducted by Badrul Chowdhury, M.D, Ph.D., from the FDA announcing the staged removal of familiar MDI aerosol asthma / COPD products propelled by chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). This follows the removal of the "essential use" designation which allowed them to remain on the market while alternatives were developed.

The affected products, manufacturers and their phase out schedule include:

- Tilade Inhaler (nedocromil; King Pharmaceuticals) -- June 14, 2010
- Alupent Inhalation Aerosol (metaproterenol; Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals) -- June 14, 2010
- Azmacort Inhalation Aerosol (triamcinolone; Abbott Laboratories) -- Dec. 31, 2010
- Intal Inhaler (cromolyn; King Pharmaceuticals) -- Dec. 31, 2010
- Aerobid Inhaler System (flunisolide; Forest Laboratories) – June 30, 2011
- Combivent Inhalation Aerosol (albuterol and ipratropium in combination; Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals) – Dec. 31, 2013
- Maxair Autohaler (pirbuterol; Graceway Pharmaceuticals) – Dec. 31, 2013

After those dates, these medications will not be sold or distributed in the United States. Dr. Chowdhury acknowledges, especially in the case of Combivent, that patients with COPD may experience additional costs from co-pays on individual inhalers as opposed to the combination, but a greater good is in consideration. Additional time is also granted for Maxair to allow patients to become reaccustomed to a non-breath activated inhaler. He noted "the phase out of these chlorofluorocarbons is an example of how international cooperation will help mankind."

As you know, albuterol CFC-MDI was discontinued in December 2008. When I raised the issue of epinephrine CFC-propelled inhaler, which is available over-the-counter, Dr. Chowdhury indicated that it will be phased out by December 31, 2011.

Patients using the inhalers scheduled to be phased out are advised to talk to their health care professional about switching to one of several alternative treatments currently available. Until then, patients should continue using their current inhaler medication.

For the full text of the conference including the question and answer, click here:
<http://www.federalregister.gov>

For the press release, click here:
<http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm208302.htm>

A replay of the teleconference will be available until May 13, 2010. You can access the replay by calling 866-411-1706 or 1-203-369-0653 (international), passcode is 8571.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sami Bahna". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Sami Bahna, MD, DrPH, FCAAI
ACAAI President