

## Medicines Management FAQs – COVID19

### Should I avoid prescribing steroids when treating asthma and COPD during COVID19 outbreak?

[BTS](#) and [NICE](#) have produced guidance for Community Respiratory Services in relation to COVID-19. The overriding message is that people should continue with their normal treatment (as per NICE guidance) and follow their personal management plans. Exacerbations should be treated with steroids and/or antibiotics **if clinically indicated**. See also [Should I prescribe COPD/Asthma rescue packs during COVID19 outbreak?](#).

#### COPD

There is no evidence that treatment with **inhaled** corticosteroids (ICS) for COPD increases the risk associated with COVID-19. Patients established on ICS should continue to use them, and any planned trials of withdrawal of ICS should be delayed. While there is some evidence that use of ICS in COPD may increase the overall risk of pneumonia (see the [2014 MHRA drug safety update on inhaled corticosteroids: pneumonia](#)), do not use this risk alone as a reason to change treatment in those established on ICS and risk destabilising COPD management

Patients on long-term **oral** corticosteroids should be advised that they should continue to take them at their prescribed dose, because stopping them can be harmful. Patients should be advised to carry a Steroid Treatment Card.

See [NICE COVID-19 rapid guideline: community-based care of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#) for further guidance on COPD management.

#### ASTHMA

There is no evidence that **inhaled** corticosteroids increase the risk of getting COVID-19. People should continue using inhaled corticosteroids because stopping can increase the risk of asthma exacerbation.

Patients on maintenance **oral** corticosteroids should continue to take them at their prescribed dose because stopping them can be harmful.

See [NICE COVID-19 rapid guideline: severe asthma](#) for further guidance on management of severe asthma.

Below is a link to useful patient information for patients with asthma from asthma UK <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/coronavirus-covid-19/>