

Understanding the new combination inhalers

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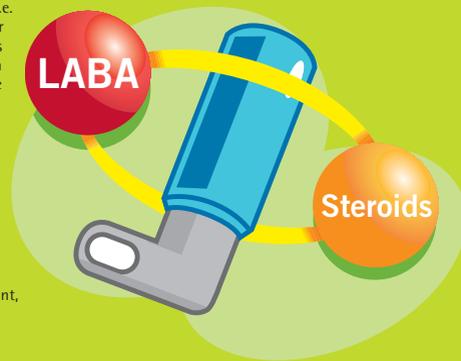
Asthma is a chronic condition of the airways, where the airways become narrowed and inflamed, making it difficult to breathe. It is common for the airways to be in an inflamed state, even without asthma symptoms (wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath).

Inhaled combination therapy (combination of inhaled long acting bronchodilator (LABA) and inhaled steroids) are newer preventer medications that have a fast and sustained action in relieving symptoms. The inhaled steroid component controls the hypersensitive and inflamed airways. The LABA component opens up the constricted airways and maintains this for up to 12 hours.

Studies have shown that the two components act synergistically (i.e. each increases the action of the other). The synergism allows lower doses of steroids to be used, thus reducing the unwanted side effects associated with inhaled steroids. Clinical studies in persistent asthma have shown that combination therapy is more effective than the use of inhaled steroids alone even at higher doses.

A recent approach using inhaled combination (budesonide/formoterol) therapy for both maintenance therapy and symptom relief, thereby overcoming the need for a separate reliever inhaler, has also shown improved asthma control and reduced risk of severe asthma exacerbation. Other studies using combination of salmeterol/fluticasone have shown that asthma can be completely controlled by this approach.

Combination inhalers have become important in asthma treatment, and will benefit an increasing number of asthma patients.



了解新的结合式吸入器

新加坡中央医院呼吸道疾病与急救医药部门高级顾问
Tan Keng Leong 医生

哮喘是一种慢性呼吸道疾病，患者往往因呼吸道窄化和发炎而呼吸困难。即使没有出现哮喘症状（喘鸣、胸闷、呼吸急促），患者的呼吸道处于发炎的情况也很常见。

吸入性结合疗法（结合吸入长效bronchodilator[LABA]和吸入类固醇）是一种较新的预防药，具有快速而持久舒缓症状的功效。其吸入性类固醇成份能抑制呼吸道的过敏性和发炎，而LABA成份则可使狭窄的呼吸道张开，并保持畅通达12小时。

研究显示，这两种成份能产生增效作用（也就是两种成份能促进彼此的效用），从而使类固醇的使用剂量得以降低，因吸入性类固醇而引起的副作用也相应减少。针对持续性哮喘进行的临床研究表明，结合性疗法比单单使用吸入性类固醇更有效，即使类固醇的剂量较高也是如此。

最近采用的一种治疗方式是把吸入性结合（budesonide/formoterol）疗法运用于维护治疗和舒缓症状，因而不再需要另外使用一个舒缓药吸入器。这种治疗方式显示，患者能更好的控制哮喘，并降低病情恶化的危险性。其他使用salmeterol/fluticasone结合疗法的研究表明，通过这种疗法能完全控制哮喘病情。

结合式吸入器在哮喘治疗中已经变得相当重要，并将使更多哮喘患者从中获益。

PSI of 128! What to do?

Advice to Asthmatics on their Asthma and How to Keep Healthy During the Haze
Dr Amy Stebbings, Consultant Respiratory Physician, Gleneagles Hospital

Increasing air pollution may aggravate asthma. This has been well documented by scientific studies in children highlighting increasing symptoms, increased use of unscheduled medications and increased risk of asthma exacerbations during summer months in the USA with increased ozone and small particle pollution in the air.

What advice, then, should we give to asthma patients?

- 1 Notice when your asthma symptoms develop.** Symptoms such as cough at night, increased chest tightness and wheezing are common asthma symptoms which should be taken seriously. Symptoms may also occur a day later because the airways are sensitised by the air pollution to common triggers such as house dust and mould.
- 2 Plan your activities for the day depending on the level of air pollution.** For example, it may not be advisable to plan a soccer game when the air pollution is high. Postpone it to another day. Instead, arrange a different activity which may be held indoors, such as badminton or indoor basketball.
- 3 Listen to your body's symptoms.** If you experience chest tightness, cough or wheezing more than usual, step up your medications, with guidance from your doctor. Do not ignore your symptoms thinking it will go away.
- 4 Consult your doctor.** If you are on preventive inhalers, make sure you take them regularly. In addition, make sure you have your reliever inhaler on hand in case you need it. Talk to your doctor about an Asthma Action Plan if you don't have one already.

With this advice, all asthma patients should not be concerned about the haze situation in Singapore. The daily PSI may be check on the website www.app.nea.gov.sg.

空气污染指数高达128! 怎么办?

给哮喘患者相关哮喘病和烟害期间保持健康的忠告

鹰阁医院呼吸疾病顾问医师史泰宾斯医生

日益严重的空气污染可能会使哮喘恶化。这一点已经被针对儿童进行的科学研究所证实。这些研究强调，由于空气中的臭氧和微粒污染增加，美国夏季期间患者的症状更常发作，临时药物的使用次数增加，哮喘恶化的几率也更高。

那么我们应该给予哮喘患者什么忠告？

1. 当哮喘症状发作时注意其情况。认真看待诸如晚间咳嗽、胸闷和喘鸣等常见的哮喘症状。由于空气污染造成呼吸道敏感，进而对诸如住家灰尘和霉菌等常见诱因产生过敏反应，因此哮喘症状也可能在一天后才出现。
2. 按照当天的空气污染水平策划你的活动。例如：如果空气污染水平高，踢足球可能就不是一个好主意，应该改天再进行。你可以安排其他室内活动，例如：打羽毛球或室内篮球。
3. 按身体症状行事。如果你觉得胸闷、咳嗽或喘鸣的次数比平时多，可在医生的指导下加强用药。不要忽视你的症状，以为症状会自然消失。
4. 征求医生的意见。如果你正使用预防药吸入器，切记按时使用。此外，确保你随身携带舒缓药吸入器，以便需要时使用。如果你还没有拟定哮喘行动计划，可以就此问题和医生讨论。

有了上述忠告，所有哮喘患者都不应该对新加坡的烟雾情况过度担心。欲知日常空气污染指数，可上网站www.nea.gov.sg查阅。



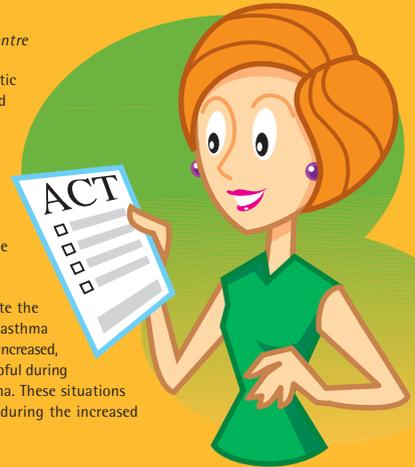
Asthma control - as good as can be?

Dr Hui Kok Pheng
Consultant Respiratory Physician, Mt Elizabeth Medical Centre

How do you know that your asthma is well controlled? A diabetic can check his blood sugar level, and hypertension can be checked with a blood pressure monitor. Asthma control can be checked with a peak flow meter at home. A newer approach is self evaluation by patients with the help of a simple questionnaire. The Asthma Control Test (ACT) is a short, simple questionnaire that has been validated by research that the ACT score correlates to a specialist assessment of asthma control. In other words, the patient's own assessment using the ACT gives a reliable evaluation of his/her asthma control at home.

Studies have shown that many asthma sufferers underestimate the severity of their asthma condition, and live with suboptimal asthma control. If asthma control is inadequate, asthma treatment can be increased, or advice sought from a doctor. This approach is particularly helpful during periods when there is an increased risk of a flare up of asthma. These situations may occur during stress, viral flu infection or more recently during the increased haze hazard in Singapore (see [article on haze](#)).

The ACT is included in this newsletter. It is also available at all doctors' clinics, hospitals and polyclinics, as well as online at www.asthmacontroltest.com.



哮喘控制 - 已经完善了吗?

伊丽沙白医院呼吸道顾问医师
Hui Kok Pheng 医生

你如何知道自己的哮喘病已经受到有效的控制？糖尿病患者能检测自己的血糖水平，高血压也能用血压计检查出来。哮喘病患者则可以在家使用呼气峰流速测定仪（peak flow meter）来监测哮喘的控制状况。最新的方法是由患者借助一份简单的问卷作自我评估。哮喘控制测试（简称ACT）是经研究证明有效的一份简短问卷，其评分和专家对哮喘控制的评估相互对应。换句话说，患者采用ACT所作的自我评估相当可靠，足以反映他在家里的哮喘控制状况。

研究显示，许多哮喘患者低估了本身病情的严重性，因而生活在不太理想的哮喘控制状态中。如果患者的哮喘控制不足，有可能需要加强哮喘治疗，或者征求医生的意见。哮喘控制测试在哮喘发作几率较高的时期尤其有用。这种情况在压力大、感冒病毒感染，或者像最近新加坡烟雾弥漫（参阅有关烟雾的文章）的时期都可能发生。本简讯附有ACT问卷。您也可向所有医生的诊所、医院和综合诊所索取，或者上网从www.asthmacontroltest.com下载。

...continue from page 1

AA supported Kids Asthma Day and ACT project. Kids Asthma Day aims to increase the awareness of asthma and allergic rhinitis in children, and ACT empowers patients to optimize control of their asthma.

Throughout the year, AA has continued to promote asthma awareness in Singapore. I would like to thank our council member Dr Jeff Tay, and our group of asthma nurse educators, who made these outreach programmes possible.

I hope you will find the newsletter helpful, and your feedback is most welcome.

Dr Hui Kok Pheng, President

...续第1页

哮喘病协会也大力支持儿童哮喘日和ACT计划。儿童哮喘日旨在提高人们对哮喘病和过敏性鼻炎的认识，而ACT计划则是为了协助患者把哮喘病情控制在最理想的状态。

这一年来，本协会继续在新加坡致力提高公众对哮喘病的认知，谨此感谢我们的理事会成员Jeff Tay医生和哮喘教育护士们，在他们的努力之下，这些活动才得以成功举办。

我希望您能从这份简讯中获益，欢迎您提出反馈。

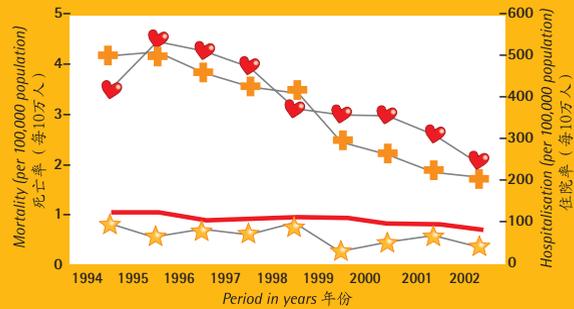
Hui Kok Pheng医生，主席

AA sponsored local study confirms preventers reduce asthma deaths in Singapore

Dr Dawn Lim (NUH paediatrician) recently reported that deaths due to asthma in Singapore is on a downward trend (see graph). The downtrend is related to an increase use of preventer drugs throughout Singapore. Although well-known from studies in Europe and USA, this is the first time that this relationship is found in Singapore. The study highlights the importance of regular preventer treatment in asthma control, and further validates the usefulness of the AA sticker project. (This study was sponsored by AA research fund.)

本协会赞助的本地研究确认预防药能减少本地哮喘致死的案例

最近，Dawn Lim医生（国大医院儿科医师）在报告中指出，新加坡因哮喘而死亡的案例有下降的趋势（参阅图表）。这种趋势和本地预防药的使用增加有关。尽管在欧美的研究中两者的关系已广为人知，但在新加坡还是第一次有此发现。这项研究强调了定时预防药疗法对哮喘控制的重要性，并进一步证实本协会贴纸计划的良好效用。（这项研究是由哮喘病协会研究基金资助。）



★ Mortality (5 - 34 yrs) 死亡率 (5-34岁) + Hospitalisation (0 - 15 yrs) 住院率 (0-15岁) ♥ Mortality (35 - 64 yrs) 死亡率 (35-64岁) — Hospitalisation (15+ yrs) 住院率 (15岁以上)

Patients corner 患者园地

Madam Goh Neo is 54 years old and has asthma since childhood. Her condition deteriorated about 6 years ago when she became breathless with persistent coughing, and would have 2 to 3 asthma attacks a month. "I felt so sickly and it affected my job so I had to stop working", she said. Her asthma was uncontrolled despite going to many different clinics.

In 2003, she turned to the Asthma Association for help as she was feeling breathless walking a few steps, and was advised to seek opinion from an asthma specialist. The Asthma Specialist reviewed her case and did a complete overhaul of her management. In addition, AA provided welfare subsidy for her treatment.

Madam Goh's condition improved after 6 months of regular treatment and review. Now, she is able to take care of 2 energetic toddlers as a child caregiver. She has financial independence and has stopped the welfare subsidy from AA. She says with pride that she no longer uses her reliever inhaler but she keeps one on standby just in case. She continues with her preventer treatment regularly.

President's Comment: This case reinforces the message on the AA sticker - 'Daily Use of Preventers Saves Lives'.

现今54岁的Goh Neo女士，自小就罹患哮喘病。

她的病情在6年前开始恶化，经常呼吸困难，不断咳嗽，一个月内哮喘发作两三次。她说：“我觉得身体虚弱，很容易生病，工作也受到影响，只好停止工作。”尽管她四处求诊，但一直无法有效控制哮喘。

她在2003年向哮喘病协会求助，因为她已经弱得只要走几步路，就会觉得呼吸困难。协会建议她征求哮喘专科医生的意见，专科医生重新检视她的病情，并彻底修改了治疗方案。此外，协会也为她提供医疗福利补助金。

经过6个月的定期治疗，吴女士的病情有所起色。现在，她是一名照顾两名活泼婴儿的保姆，有独立的经济能力，不再需要协会的福利补助金。她自豪地表示，她已经不再使用舒缓药吸入器，只是保留一支备用。目前，她继续进行预防药治疗。

会长附注：上述个案进一步说明了AA贴纸信息的重要性：“天天使用预防药能拯救生命。”

Quiz Corner

All the answers are found in this newsletter. Fill in the blanks and stand to win an Asthma Association T shirt. Send in your entries by 28 February 2007. Terms and conditions apply

1. ACT stands for _____.
2. _____ have become important in asthma treatment.
3. The message on the AA sticker reads _____.
4. The AA sponsored local study confirms _____ reduce asthma deaths in Singapore.

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Please mail this form to: PO Box 572, Marine Parade Post Office, Singapore 914403 or email to asthma@pacific.net.sg

Active with Asthma

Asthma Association Newsletter
www.asthma.org.sg

Asthma Association Update

Hi

This newsletter brings the close of 2006 - a year with challenges for many of us in Singapore. As we prepare for the newsletter, the haze continues to cover Singapore and we hope it did not cause too many problems for your asthma. However, there were reports of increase in asthma symptoms, and a few patients suffered significant flare up or exacerbation of asthma. This brings home the important point of maintaining regular preventer therapy so that these exacerbations can be prevented.



On a more positive note, deaths due to asthma in Singapore is on the downtrend, as reported by a study that was funded by AA research grant. This downtrend was associated with increased use of preventer therapy.

The AA's sticker initiative - which helps to remind asthma patients to maintain regular preventer therapy, is now into its third year running, and we are committed to continue with this project.

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Community outreach programmes: Talks, Screenings and Counselling

哮喘病协会最新动态

大家好，

本期通讯的出版标志著2006年已近尾声。这一年对许多新加坡人来说，是一个充满挑战的年头。在筹备出版通讯期间，烟雾仍然弥漫整个新加坡，我们希望烟害没有对您的哮喘病情造成太多问题。但是，据报这段时期哮喘症状有增多的趋势，也有一些患者哮喘严重发作或恶化。这让我们认识到，继续进行定期预防药治疗以预防病情恶化的重要性。

这一年也有令人鼓舞的消息：由哮喘病协会研究基金资助的一项研究计划表明，新加坡因哮喘而死亡的案例有下降的趋势。这种趋势和预防药治疗的增加有关。

由本协会发动的贴纸计划已经进入第三年。这项计划旨在提醒哮喘患者持续进行定期预防药治疗，我们承诺在未来继续推行这项计划。

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