

STOW SURGERY

MAUGERSBURY ROAD, STOW ON THE WOLD
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Dr P Sherringham

Dr C Lawrence

Our Ref: <<custom1>>

Dr A Chiles

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<<date1>>

Dear <<Title>> <<Surname>>>,

As you will know, as a practice we are constantly reviewing our prescribing in line with latest evidence and recommendations from local and national medical bodies.

Some people, who lack medical knowledge, are spreading misinformation on social media, suggesting patients with an asthma diagnosis should obtain a so called “rescue pack”.

An asthma rescue pack is normally used when a patient suffers from an asthma exacerbation (or flare-up) caused by a bacterial chest infection.

The asthma rescue pack contains the following:

- An **oral steroid**, normally Prednisolone. Oral steroids **depress your immune system**, reducing the inflammatory response happening in your chest leading to a flare-up of your asthma symptoms. Oral steroids will not help your symptoms if you get COVID-19, in fact they will do the opposite. They will worsen your symptoms as they reduce your natural ability to fight the viral infection.
- An **antibiotic** such as Doxycycline, Amoxicillin or Clarithromycin. These drugs are effective against a bacterial infection but are completely **ineffective against a viral infection** such as the one caused by COVID-19.

The asthma “rescue pack” will not help you should you be infected with COVID-19 so please do not call the surgery to request one to help with COVID-19 symptoms.

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms please do the following:

- You **need to stay in your home** for 7 days if you live on your own, or 14 days if you live with others. Everyone in your household will need to stay in the house for 14 days.
- You don't need to contact 111 to tell them you are staying at home.
- If your COVID-19 symptoms don't go away after 7 days, or get worse, or **you are having difficulty breathing**, call 111 for advice, or 999 if you need emergency care.
- Tell them that you have asthma, and whether your asthma symptoms are getting worse.
- If you get an asthma cough and are not sure whether your cough is a symptom of COVID-19 or related to your asthma, please speak to your GP, use the **online 111 service** or call 111 to ensure that you get the right care.

- Keep following your asthma action plan to manage your asthma and so you know what to do if your asthma symptoms get worse. If you are having an asthma attack, call 999 for an ambulance as usual, and tell them you have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Carry on taking all your usual asthma medicines as normal.

If someone you live with develops COVID-19 symptoms then please do the following:

- You, and everyone else in your household, need to stay at home for 14 days from the time the first person in your household got symptoms.
- If you get symptoms of COVID-19, you need to stay at home for at least 7 days, even if that takes you past the end of the 14 days you have already been at home.

If your asthma is getting worse and you have symptoms of COVID-19, please use the **111 online service** or call 111. Don't go to your doctor's surgery.

When you contact 111:

- Let them know that you have asthma and that you're getting asthma symptoms.
- Explain how often you are using your reliever inhaler and if it's not working completely or lasting for 4 hours.
- Follow the instructions given to you by 111.
- If your symptoms get worse quickly and you're worried you are having an asthma attack, call 999 and let them know you may have coronavirus and are having an asthma attack.
- If your asthma is getting worse and **you don't have symptoms of COVID-19**, make an urgent appointment to see your GP as usual. They may ask to speak to you by phone or video. If you have an asthma attack, follow the steps on your action plan and call 999 for an ambulance if you need to.

Please stay safe, stay at home and do not hesitate to contact us at the surgery should you have a question or are concerned about your health or medication.

Yours sincerely,

Javier Llodra-Belda
Clinical Pharmacist

(On behalf of the Doctors)