

## Why Should I Transition?

The switch to HFA-propelled inhalers is a necessary step to protect the environment. Transitions from CFC to HFA quick-relief albuterol inhalers have already been successfully completed around the world, including Europe, Canada, Australia, and Japan.

## Why Should I Transition?

There are a number of reasons why now is a good time to make this transition:

- CFC-based inhalers are harmful to the environment.
- CFC quick-relief albuterol inhalers will not be available after December 31, 2008.
- HFA quick-relief albuterol inhalers are currently available and are the same medicine as the CFC-based version.
- During this transition, manufacturers will gradually reduce their supply of CFC-based quick-relief asthma inhalers and increase supplies of HFA-based quick-relief inhalers.
- HFA quick-relief albuterol inhaler manufacturers have assistance programs for patients with financial need to successfully make the transition.
- Making the transition to an HFA-based quick-relief albuterol inhaler is a good opportunity to review your overall asthma management plan with your doctor.

[www.transitionnow.org](http://www.transitionnow.org)



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## ABCs of HFAs: Understanding Your Quick-Relief Asthma Inhaler

### Introduction

The medicine in your quick-relief asthma inhaler is staying the same, but the chemical used to “propel” the medicine out of the inhaler is changing. Talk to your doctor to transition now.

Your current inhaler may use CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), which are harmful to the Earth’s ozone layer. The government is requiring all inhalers to use HFA (hydrofluoroalkane) as a safe, effective, and environmentally-friendly alternative.

It is important to speak to your doctor as soon as possible about making the switch to an HFA asthma inhaler.

### Why Is The Transition Happening?

In order to protect the environment, the FDA issued a final mandate in 2005 requiring that CFC albuterol inhalers be entirely removed from the market by December 31, 2008.

It wouldn’t seem that the small amount of CFCs in a typical quick-relief asthma inhaler could pose a threat to the environment, but scientists remind us that these CFCs are exhaled intact into the atmosphere and make their way to the stratosphere, where ultraviolet light breaks them down and causes ozone depletion.

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## Questions To Ask Your Physician

When talking to your physician, take a few minutes to ask:

- How can I transition to an HFA inhaler now?
- What should I expect from my HFA inhaler?
- Do I need additional maintenance medication to manage my chronic asthma?
- Are my strategies for asthma trigger avoidance up-to-date?



## What To Expect From Your HFA Inhaler

Even though your inhaler is changing, the medicine inside is not. HFA quick-relief albuterol inhalers are FDA-approved and are equally as safe and effective as your current CFC quick-relief albuterol inhaler.

While the albuterol inside the HFA inhaler is the same as in the CFC inhaler, there are some differences between the two (such as taste and spray force) and you should anticipate this as you transition. For example, the sensation of the HFA spray will be less forceful than what you may be accustomed to with the CFC inhaler. Additionally, HFA inhalers have specific cleaning instructions that can be found within the information provided with the product or by asking your doctor.

If you currently use a CFC quick-relief albuterol inhaler, speak with your doctor as soon as possible about transitioning to an HFA quick-relief asthma inhaler.

You should know that during this transition period, both CFC and HFA inhalers are on the market. However, because of supply and demand in your area, an HFA inhaler may not be immediately available. To find out more about supply considerations, please visit [www.transitionnow.org](http://www.transitionnow.org).



## Review Your Asthma Management Plan

Asthma is a condition that requires daily management and focus, so use your next appointment with your doctor to discuss your current asthma treatment plan and ask about transitioning to an HFA quick-relief inhaler.

When you talk to your doctor about making the transition, think about whether you find yourself using your albuterol quick-relief inhaler more than twice a week. If so, your asthma may not be properly controlled and you and your doctor may need to re-evaluate your long-term maintenance plan and the need for other treatments.

Short-acting, quick-relief albuterol works to relax the airway muscle, but doesn't treat the other aspects of asthma inflammation.

Additionally, the visit with your doctor is a good opportunity to ask about the most up-to-date techniques and strategies for avoiding asthma triggers.

When you do transition to your HFA quick-relief inhaler, please make sure to monitor how your asthma responds and tell your doctor immediately if you think you're not responding the way you should.

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## HFA Inhaler Cost and Assistance Programs

If you currently have prescription drug coverage through your employer or through Medicare or Medicaid, you will need to confirm the copay that applies to the HFA quick-relief albuterol inhaler. If you self-pay for your prescription drug coverage, the cost of your HFA quick-relief asthma inhalers may be higher than what you currently pay since there are no generic versions of HFA quick-relief inhalers.

If you require financial assistance, the Partnership for Prescription Assistance (PPA) may be helpful. PPA can be reached at:

- The Partnership for Prescription Assistance – call 1-888-477-2669 or visit [www.pparx.org](http://www.pparx.org).



## Resources

Patients needing further information on making the transition to their HFA quick-relief inhaler should contact the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America at 1-800-7-ASTHMA or visit [www.transitionnow.org](http://www.transitionnow.org) for more information and links to other resources.