

# AU InforMed

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## *May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month*



**Each year the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) asks the president to declare the month of May “National Asthma and Allergy Month”. May has been known as National Asthma and Allergy month since 1984 when President Ronald Reagan signed the proclamation. In 2006 the theme is “Indoor Allergies and Allergy Avoidance” to draw attention to these problems. In this special edition of AU Informed we will focus on Asthma and Allergy Awareness as well as new developments in this field. For more information or programs, visit [www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org). Hope you enjoy!**



### **Key Inforbits**

- Albuterol MDI changed to HFA
- Update on Pseudoephedrine
- Telithromycin in acute asthma exacerbations
- New black box warnings

### **NEW DRUGS, and other related stuff ...**



**Albuterol MDI to HFA...** the FDA has announced that after December 31, 2008 all metered dose inhalers that contain chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) will no longer be produced, sold or marketed in the United States. CFCs are used as a propellant in metered dose inhalers and have been shown to deplete the ozone which increases the risk for skin cancer and cataracts. A new, safe and effective alternative propellant, hydroflouroalkane (HFA), has been created to replace CFCs, and will become the required standard for all inhalers. According to the FDA Proventil HFA<sup>®</sup> (by Key Pharmaceuticals) and Ventolin HFA<sup>®</sup> (by GlaxoSmithKline) can formally be considered as alternatives to albuterol MDI. For more information visit the FDA’s website at: <http://www.fda.gov/cder/mdi/mdifaqs.htm>.



**Pseudoephedrine behind the counter...** The Bush Administration has signed the “Combat Methamphetamine Act” to prevent the diversion of pseudoephedrine to make methamphetamine. Their efforts are focused on four core areas: prevention and treatment; law enforcement; education; and management of the drug's unique consequences. The new law restricts the sale of nonprescription medicines containing pseudoephedrine, ephedrine, and phenylpropanolamine (PPA). As of April 8, 2006, an individual can only purchase 9 grams a month and 3.6 grams in a single day. Mail order restrictions limit sales to 7.5 grams a month. Also as of April 8, 2006, these products must be sold in blister packs, each of which may contain a maximum of two dosage units. Although many retailers have already moved these products behind the counter, it is officially September 30, 2006 that these products must be placed behind the counter and purchasers must show identification to obtain these products.

New rules for the sale of pseudoephedrine and other methamphetamine precursors. Pharmacist’s Letter/Prescriber’s Letter 2006;22(4):220413.

**FROM THE MEDICAL LITERATURE ...**



**Telithromycin for Acute Asthma Exacerbation...** A recent study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* evaluated the use of Ketek® (telithromycin by Sanofi Aventis) 800 mg daily for 10 days (in addition to usual care) in 278 asthmatics within 24 hours of the onset of exacerbation. Of the two primary outcomes, improvement in asthma symptoms and peak expiratory flow, only asthma symptoms showed a significant improvement in the telithromycin group compared to placebo. The telithromycin group had a mean decrease in symptom scores of -1.3 compared to -1.0 for the placebo group (p=0.004). This difference was equal to a symptom reduction of 40.4% for the telithromycin group and a 26.6% reduction for the placebo group (p=0.005). In addition, the number of symptom free days was significantly greater in the telithromycin group compared to placebo (16% vs 8%, p=0.006). Nausea was more common with telithromycin. Johnson SL, Blasi F, Black PN, Martin RJ, Farrell DJ, Nieman RB. The effect of telithromycin in acute exacerbations of asthma. *N Engl J Med.* 2006;354:1589-1600.



**New Black Box Warnings...** On March 2, 2006 the FDA approved labeling changes with new black box warnings for the long acting beta agonists Serevent® (salmeterol by GlaxoSmithKline) and Advair® (fluticasone/salmeterol by GlaxoSmithKline). According to the FDA, salmeterol may increase the risk of asthma-related deaths. In a study of 26,000 patients, more salmeterol users died from asthma-related problems than patients not receiving salmeterol. This study suggests this risk might be greater in African Americans. The new labeling recommends that Advair® and Serevent® not be used first line for patients with asthma and should only be considered for patients uncontrolled by other asthma medications. It is important to tell patients not to stop taking their current asthma medications and to talk with their doctor about their current treatment plan. For more information visit the FDA’s website at: <http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/infopage/LABA/default.htm>.

**Reviews of Note ...**

- Lemanske RF, Busse WW. Asthma: Factors underlying inception, exacerbation, and disease progression. *J Allergy Clin Immunol.* 2006;117:S456-61.
- Golightly LK, Greos LS. Second generation antihistamines: actions and efficacy in the management of allergic disorders. *Drugs.* 2005; 65(3): 341-384.



- Plaut M, Valentine MD. Allergic rhinitis. *N Engl J Med*. 2005 Nov 3;353(18):1934-44.

**Famous Asthmatics**....If you have asthma you are in good company. Below is a list of many famous actors, actresses, presidents, athletes, and others who suffer from asthma:

Lindsay Lohan	Jerome Bettis	Billy Joel
Jason Alexander	Jackie Joyner-Kersey	Alice Cooper
Bop Hope	Kristi Yamaguchi	Coolio
Christopher Reeve	Dennis Rodman	Kenny G
Elizabeth Taylor	Calvin Coolidge	Jonathon Davis (Korn)
Steve Allen	Theodore Roosevelt	Ludwig von Beethoven
Charles Dickens	John F. Kennedy	
Jessie Jackson	Woodrow Wilson	

### **FROM THE LAY LITERATURE about medicine ...**



**For life without limits...**The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) is an organization devoted to the education, advocacy, research, and publication on asthma and allergies. The group has a very helpful website with information that is easily accessible including support groups, a question hotline, current research, new drug updates, and links to many other useful sites. The site also offers a free newsletter and a catalog for helpful resources and educational programs that can be set up in pharmacies. To check out this website go to: <http://www.aafa.org/>



**Would you like to know more about the allergy risks in your area?** The website [www.Pollen.com](http://www.Pollen.com) provides an up to date four day forecast on allergy levels. Visitors can sign up for a free AllergyAlert email of allergy conditions in an area during critical allergy times. The site also offers a glossary of pollen types and other information to help allergy sufferers find relief. For more information visit the website at: [www.pollen.com](http://www.pollen.com)



**The Asthma Friendly® Certification Program**.....is a program developed by Allergy Standards Limited (ASL) to help consumers identify products which are safe and friendly for patients with asthma or allergies. ASL has devised a series of proprietary testing protocols and suitability specifications which must be met in order for products to be approved by the Asthma Friendly® program. The group has created a site for patrons to search for products which have been approved or shoppers can look for the official Asthma Friendly® logo on packaging in stores. For more information visit: [http://asthmafriendly.com/about\\_us.html](http://asthmafriendly.com/about_us.html)

**For more information on Asthma and Allergies** or other health-related issues review these helpful resources:

- **Consumer Drug Reference**, published by Consumer Reports November 29, 2005— Includes more than 11,000 prescription and OTC drugs including vitamins and mineral and a medical glossary. Contains a full color ID chart of 1,232 drugs. Also includes a free link to the USP website for updates.

- **The Essential Guide to Prescriptions Drugs 2006** by James J Rybacki, Pharm.D., published by Collins January 1, 2006—This book contains detailed profiles of 300 drugs and 2000 brands of major importance; also contains a 16 page color insert for drug ID.
- **The PDR Pocket Guide to Prescription Drugs, the 6<sup>th</sup> edition**, by Thompson PDR, published November 23<sup>rd</sup> 2003—Contains more than 1000 brand name drugs and their generic equivalents and a color index for drug identification.
- **The Pill Book** by Harold Silverman, published by Bantam Books May 2, 2000—This book, written by pharmacologists, contains a complete profile of over 1,500 drugs and a 32 page insert of actual size color photos of the drugs.

#### Online Resources:

- National Library of Medicine available at [www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov) –Contains a drug encyclopedia, dictionary, covers various health topics and current news.
- SafeMedication.com from the American Society of Health Systems Pharmacists available at [www.safemedication.com](http://www.safemedication.com) –Features information on more than 800 drugs, information of using different dosage forms, health alerts, alternative medicines, links to other websites of interest and a place for Q&A from pharmacists
- Drugs.com Drug Information Online available from [www.drugs.com](http://www.drugs.com) –Features over 24,000 approved medications, news releases, drug interactions, pill identification and images, and a discussion board forum.

#### AAFA Celebration Days during National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

- World Asthma Day  
(1st Tuesday in May)
- Food Allergy Awareness Week  
(Begins 2nd Monday in May)
- National School Nurse Day, May 10  
(Always the Wednesday between May 6th and 12th)



#### The last “dose” ...

Another way to say that medications for allergic diseases are expensive:  
Robbing Peter to pay for Pollen

*An electronic bulletin of drug and health-related news highlights, a service of ...*

*Auburn University, Harrison School of Pharmacy, Drug Information Center*

• Phone 334-844-4400 • Fax 334-844-8366 • <http://www.pharmacy.auburn.edu/dilrc/dilrc.htm>

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