

The Prudent Prescriber

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June 2017

Good News for Patients with Asthma: AirDuo and its Generic

Pharm Reps ≠ Rational Prescribing

(PR)



(RP)

On April 14, 2017, Teva released both AirDuo and its authorized generic! These inhalers combine the same medications as Advair, but at different strengths.

Inhaled Corticosteroid (ICS)/Long-acting Beta 2 Agonists (LABA)

Drug	Doses	Age	GoodRx (accessed 6/3/17) 1 month supply
Generic AirDuo*	55/14 113/14 232/14	≥ 12 years	\$48.58 Walgreens Five other stores for \$86 - \$91
Advair Diskus*	100/50 250/50 500/50	≥ 4 years	\$306 - \$495
Advair HFA*	45/21 115/21 230/21	≥ 12 years	\$298 - \$495
Symbicort**	80/4.5 160/4.5	≥ 6 years	\$286 - \$325
Dulera***	100/5 200/5	≥ 12 years	\$287 - \$306
Breo****	100/25 200/25	≥ 18 years	\$339

* AirDuo and Advair products: fluticasone/salmeterol

** Symbicort: budesonide/formoterol

*** Dulera: mometasone/formoterol

**** Breo: fluticasone/vilanterol

Dosing: AirDuo, one inhalation twice daily (about 12 hours apart). Then rinse mouth after use. Do not use with spacer or volume holding chamber.

Adverse Events: The most common adverse reactions (reported in >3% of patients) include naso-pharyngitis, oral candidiasis, back pain, headache and cough.

Contraindicated: Primary treatment of status asthmaticus or acute episodes of asthma requiring intensive measures

Antibiotics do

NOT

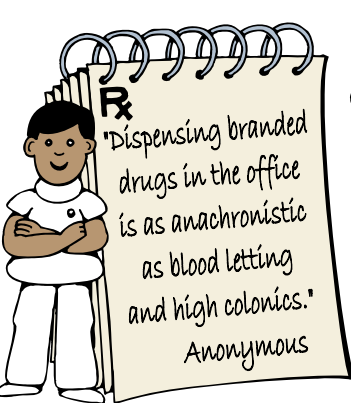


help
acute bronchitis

**β-blockers in
post-MI
save
lives**



Pill splitters save
BIG

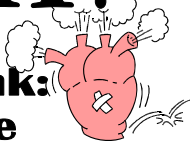


R
"Dispensing branded drugs in the office is as anachronistic as blood letting and high colonics."
Anonymous

CHE?

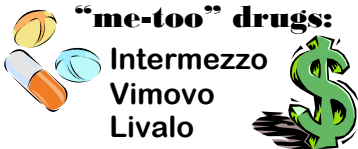
Think:

Ace
Aldactone
B-blocker
Dig
Diuretic



Avoid these expensive

"me-too" drugs:



Intermezzo
Vimovo
Livalo
Pristiq
Viibryd
Edarbi
Daliresp



Treat patients
> 60 years to 150/90



NOW AVAILABLE
ON THE
GENERIC MARQUEE

Frova→frovatriptan
Voltaren gel→diclofenac Na 1% gel
Crestor→rosuvastatin
Nuvigil→armodafinil
Jalyn→dutasteride/tamsulosin
Ortho Tri-Cyclen Lo→Tri-Lo-Marzia,
Tri-Lo-Sprintec, & others

Selected Clinical Studies: There were two randomized, double blinded, placebo-controlled 12 week efficacy and safety trials. N = 1375 adult and adolescent subjects with asthma and a baseline FEV1 of 40% to 85% of predicted, that were not optimally controlled on their current therapy.

Methods: Patients were randomly assigned to receive BID treatments as follows: 130 received a placebo inhaler, 129 received 55mcg fluticasone dry powder inhaler, 130 received 113mcg fluticasone dry powder inhaler, 129 received AirDuo 55/14mcg and 129 received AirDuo 113/14mcg. The primary endpoints for this trial were the change from baseline in the trough FEV1 at week 12.

Results: Patients receiving AirDuo 55/14mcg and AirDuo 113/14mcg had significantly greater improvements in trough FEV1 compared with fluticasone alone and with placebo. Estimated mean differences between AirDuo 55/14mcg and AirDuo 113/14mcg compared to placebo were 0.266L and 0.262L, respectively. The estimated mean differences between fluticasone 55mcg and fluticasone 113mcg compared to placebo were 0.119L and 0.151L, respectively. The estimated mean differences between AirDuo 113/14mcg and fluticasone 113mcg was 0.111L. The estimated main difference between AirDuo 55/14mcg and fluticasone 55mcg was 0.147L.

Is AirDuo too good to be true? What do the lower doses of fluticasone and salmeterol in AirDuo compared with Advair mean for patients? I asked David Scott, M.D., Grand Junction Allergist, Extraordinaire, for his thoughts.

David,

“Pros:

- Cost is favorable, although it looks like lower cost generics are in the pipeline
- 1 puff twice per day, which is quick and easy
- Patients seem to like the Respiclick device (currently ProAir is available with this device, as well)
- More than anything, I like the fact that this is progress.

Cons:

- No high dose available. The highest fluticasone propionate dose AirDuo is similar to medium dose Advair. Max AirDuo = 232/14mcg 1 puff BID, Max Advair Diskus = 500/50mcg 1 puff BID.
- Significantly less salmeterol (LABA) per dose in AirDuo compared to Advair, 14mcg in AirDuo vs 50mcg in Advair Diskus. I am concerned this may impact efficacy relative to Advair. I have only seen efficacy studies comparing AirDuo to ICS alone, not to other ICS/LABA combinations. Due to the low dose of LABA, AirDuo may ultimately be used as sort of an in-between medication for patients in whom we are debating ICS alone vs ICS/LABA.
- FDA approval down to 12 years of age, whereas Advair Diskus, the FDA approval goes down to 4 years of age.
- The lowest dose AirDuo, 55/14mcg is a tiny dose of ICS. I'm worried that may deceive some providers into thinking they are prescribing a stronger medication than they really are. For instance, if a patient was changed from Asmanex 220mcg 1 puff daily to AirDuo 55/14mcg BID, that would actually be a significant step down in ICS dose.”

Thanks, David.

My Take:

- ❖ With the dosing precautions as outlined by Dr. Scott above, the generic version of AirDuo will represent a godsend for some under-insured and un-insured patients.
- ❖ For the first time ever, asthmatic patients can buy a ICS/LABA inhaler in the United States as cheaply as buying Advair from Canada. PharmacyChecker.com prices (6/3/17) for Advair 250/50 (60 doses) range from \$37 to \$72 (USA dollars).
- ❖ None of my pharmacist and allergy colleagues can sort out why Teva brought out both branded and generic versions of AirDuo.
- ❖ Use GoodRx to “shop around” for the best price. Walgreen’s flat price of \$48.58 for all strengths of AirDuo has remained stable over the last 10 days. Remember that GoodRx data do not include smaller “mom and pop” pharmacies who may well have the best price.

You may access previous issues at <https://www.rmhp.org/i-am-a-provider/provider-resources/publications-for-providers>

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