

Dear colleagues and primary care partners

We had a fruitful year working with primary care partners. Here are a few new exciting asthma updates:

- The 2019 Global Initiative of Asthma (GINA) strategy report has declared the most significant change in asthma management in over 30 years.¹ Short-acting beta-agonist (SABA) monotherapy is no longer recommended.
- The Singapore National Asthma Program-2 will be (finally) hosting our own website on <https://www.primarycarepages.sg/> with practical toolkits for asthma management.
- We will share some practical tips during the Family Practice Skills Course on “Asthma and Inflammation – New Updates” on 21 September 2019, organized by the College of Family Physician.

Sincerely, Dr Lim Hui Fang (Director, SNAP2)

GINA 2019¹: Key changes for adults and adolescents above 12 years of age

- **SABA-only treatment is not recommended for safety reasons, even at step 1.**
- **For mild asthma (Step 1 and 2), there are a few preventor (ICS) options**
 - Daily ICS , as needed ICS-formoterol²⁻⁴, as needed low dose ICS
 - Rationale: Even in patients with mild asthma, the addition of ICS could significantly reduce the risk of severe exacerbations and deaths.^{5, 6.}
 - As needed-ICS-formoterol is an off-label recommendation and should not be confused with **Maintenance and Reliever Therapy (MART)**^{7, 8}
- **Reliever of choice**
 - Step 1-2: As needed low dose ICS- formoterol is preferred to as-needed SABA
 - Step 3-5: For patients on other maintenance ICS-LABA combination, as-needed SABA should be used as reliever. Low-dose ICS-formoterol is preferred reliever for patients only when prescribed the MART regimen.

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3. O'Byrne PM, FitzGerald M, Bateman ED. Inhaled combined budesonide-formoterol as needed in mild asthma. N Engl J Med, 2018.

4. Beasley R, Holliday M, Reddel HK, Braithwaite I, Ebmeier S, Hancox RJ, et al. Controlled Trial of Budesonide-Formoterol as Needed for Mild Asthma. New England Journal of Medicine 2019; 380:2020-30.

5. Reddel HK, Busse WW, Pedersen S, Tan WC, Chen YZ, Jorup C, et al. Should recommendations about starting inhaled corticosteroid treatment for mild asthma be based on symptom frequency: a post-hoc efficacy analysis of the START study. Lancet 2017; 389:157-66.

6. Dusser D, Montani D, Chanez P, de Blic J, Delacourt C, Deschildre A, et al. Mild asthma: an expert review on epidemiology, clinical characteristics and treatment recommendations. Allergy 2007; 62:591-604.

7. O'Byrne PM, Bisgaard H, Godard PP, Pistolesi M, Palmqvist M, Zhu Y, et al. Budesonide/Formoterol Combination Therapy as Both Maintenance and Reliever Medication in Asthma. American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine 2005; 171:129-36.

8. Papi A, Canonica GW, Maestrelli P, Paggiaro P, Olivieri D, Pozzi E, et al. Rescue use of beclomethasone and albuterol in a single inhaler for mild asthma. N Engl J Med 2007; 356:2040-52.

More Preventor, Less Reliever