

Question	Answer
Which patients are suitable for AIR?	AIR is suitable for patients who have symptoms a couple of times a week or less. If someone is having symptoms three or more times a week they should be stepped up to MART. The aim of asthma treatment is to not have asthma symptoms.
What are the maximum number of doses a patient on AIR/MART can have if they are having an asthma attack?	The licensed maximum is six doses for an asthma attack. Patients should be counselled to get help ASAP if this is needed. If more doses are needed while waiting for an ambulance or to get to hospital these can be given. (Off license)
How long can someone use extra doses of AIR before they need seen?	The official answer in Lothian is that if someone needs three or more doses in a week they should make an appointment for a review. Three or more doses of AIR in a week is a sign their asthma is not well controlled. This advice reflects the advice relating to salbutamol. With AIR a patient can have up to six doses at one time for an asthma attack and should be informed to seek help if they are needing doses and not getting much benefit from this. Some patients maybe allowed a few extra doses when exposed to a known trigger e.g. virus/cold however this should be agreed in advance and added to the Action Plan.
How can a long-acting beta agonist be as good as a short acting one in emergencies?	Formoterol works as quickly as salbutamol in relaxing the smooth muscles however it last for longer. The quick action means it is suitable for use as a reliever therapy.
Is there a maximum dose of formoterol someone can have?	Please encourage people to stick to licensed doses and get help if their symptoms are not being relieved. These doses of formoterol are well within the safe range.
Are all the strengths of Symbicort® licensed for AIR and MART?	Only Symbicort 200/6 is licensed for AIR. Symbicort® 100/6 and 200/6 can be used for MART. Symbicort® 400/6 (high strength) is not licensed for MART.
How many Symbicort® 200/6 turbobaler inhalers should one supply for AIR in teenagers and those over 12 years of age?	One is usually enough. Two may be supplied initially if there is fear one will get lost so parents want to keep a spare at home. Symbicort® turbobaler has a 3 year expiry. Symbicort® turbobaler has a dose counter so people can see how many doses are left.
If someone cannot use a DPI is there an alternative to Symbicort they can have for AIR?	There is no licensed pMDI for AIR so if someone cannot use a DPI they should be given a pMDI ICS and SABA with a spacer. Remember no one with asthma should ever be given a salbutamol alone.
How many inhalers should be supplied for those started on MART?	Ideally one however in young people it is probably best to give 2 initially and then replace one at a time as needed. All the devices have dose counters.

Do people on MART still need salbutamol for emergencies?	No. Formoterol works as fast as salbutamol and is always given with an ICS so the evidence shows this is safer for those with mild/moderate asthma. There may be some patients who have had asthma for years and are nervous about not having their blue inhaler for emergencies. One could allow them to keep their current salbutamol (although remove from repeat) as back up until they feel comfortable on MART (ideally not to be used) however a newly diagnosed asthmatic should not be given a blue inhaler.
Will anyone with asthma still get a salbutamol inhaler?	Yes, anyone who is not on a product suitable or licensed for AIR and MART e.g. a) inhalers that do not contain formoterol b) high strength combination ICS/formoterol inhalers. MART is not licensed for these doses c) triple therapy.
Why is symbicort® turbohaler not on our formulary for MART in adults?	Formulary decisions are made across three health boards. It was agreed that equivalent products were more cost effective for MART. The formulary however is regularly updated.
What is the expiry date of Fobumix® Easyhaler?	4 months once opened
What is the expiry date of pMDI Luforbec® or proxor®?	3 months once received from the pharmacy The aerochamber plus flow-vu® will have a 12 month expiry.
What is the expiry date of Fostair® Nexthaler?	6 months once opened
What is the expiry date of Symbicort® turbohaler?	The expiry date is the date on the product. This is usually 3 years.
Why do products used for AIR/MART have different maximum doses recommendations?	This is because the products contain different steroids. Symbicort® and Fobumix® contain budesonide while Fostair® and Luforbec® and Proxor® contain fine particle beclometasone which increases the potency of the steroid. Hence this affects their product licenses.
Why does the NHS Lothian AIR/MART leaflet state 8 doses is the usual maximum dose for all the AIR and MART therapies mentioned?	Eight was added as the <i>usual</i> maximum to help simplify the information going out to practices as this is new guidance for most. It is hoped that most patients will not be needing the maximum dose however to reduce the risk of people being prescribed 12 doses for products containing extra fine beclometasone (fostair®/luforbec®/Proxor®) the sheet states usually 8 doses maximum. The guide is reviewed yearly.
Can all the strengths of ICS/formoterol products be used for MART?	No high strength ICS/formoterol is not licensed for MART.

Is Fostair® 200/6 (pMDI or Nexthaler) or pMDI Luforbec® 200/6 licensed for MART?	No - only the lower strength 100/6 dose - is licensed for MART.
If someone is on a high strength ICS/formoterol product can they have low strength ICS/formoterol as their reliever?	No - patients on high strength ICS/formoterol products should have salbutamol as their reliever.
I thought people having an asthma exacerbation needed a course of oral steroids as an inhaled steroid took about 2 weeks to work. How can AIR/MART therefore be safe?	AIR and MART are used to catch the first signs of inflammation and aim to reduce the inflammation before it leads to a full exacerbation. Oral steroids however may still be needed if the lungs are very inflamed, and the AIR/MART treatment is not enough. One should review adherence, inhaler technique and current therapy after any asthma exacerbation/asthma attack to reduce the chance of this reoccurring.
What self-management plans do NHS Lothian recommend should be used when a patient is using AIR/MART therapy?	NHS Lothian recommend every patient with asthma has a self-management plan. This can be from Asthma and Lung UK (Healthcare professionals – Asthma + Lung UK) or the Primary Care Respiratory Society. Maintenance and Reliever Therapy (MART) asthma action plan Primary Care Respiratory Society and Anti-inflammatory reliever (AIR) asthma action plan Primary Care Respiratory Society

Abbreviations:

AIR – Anti-inflammatory Reliever

MART – Maintenance and Reliever Therapy

ICS – inhaled corticosteroid

SABA – short acting beta agonist

DPI – dry powder device

pMDI – pressurised meter dose inhaler

SPC – Summary of Product Characteristics