

Ellipta Inhaler Device Causes Confusion

Ellipta is an inhaler device which can combine several active ingredients. It is currently used by five different medications and the device name Ellipta has been embedded into the drug names:

- Breo Ellipta (fluticasone and vilanterol) to treat asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- Arnuity Ellipta (fluticasone) to treat asthma.
- Anoro Ellipta (umeclidinium and vilanterol) to treat COPD.
- Incruse Ellipta (umeclidinium) to treat COPD.
- Trelegy Ellipta (fluticasone, umeclidinium, and vilanterol) to treat COPD.

There have been many reports that patients and clinicians have confused these inhaler medications that use the same Ellipta device, often referring to them as Ellipta and not the drug name. The five products come in similar packaging, differing only in color, brand name, and ingredient specifications. When the packaging is opened, the inhalers are very similar in design, shape, and size. Most of the errors involved Breo Ellipta (48%) and Anoro Ellipta (43%).

Additional confusion arises from the online instructional videos and other educational materials that do not adequately distinguish between products. Some of the product websites contain misleading photos and descriptions of the medications, featuring only the brand name of the drug and missing the generic name, strength, and other label information. The online photos often do not match the actual product.

Strategies to decrease errors include:

- Familiarize yourself with the various products that use the Ellipta device.
- Recognize the name “Ellipta” is a device, not a drug.
- Educate staff about the risks of confusion.
- Do not refer to these products by the name “Ellipta” alone – use the full product names.
- Teach patients the full product names, how to use the inhaler, and that the information presented on websites may not be correct.

References

1. Institute for Safe Medication Practices. (2018). *Nurse Advise-ERR*. Retrieved from Institute for Safe Medication Practices: <http://www.ismp.org/newsletters/nursing/issues/NurseAdviseERR201807.pdf>