

# Asthma medication not working? Try another

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People who supplement rescue inhalers with a second asthma medication sometimes get little relief at first, but there's good news: Those who keep trying different options often find a medication that works, according to

Rutgers researchers.

The researchers analyzed data from 2,025 patients who used any of six FDA-approved severe [asthma](#) treatments known as "biologics" because they contain [monoclonal antibodies](#) found in living organisms.

"The practical takeaway here is pretty simple: Patients who aren't getting good relief from a particular biologic should try others," said lead author Reynold A. Panettieri Jr., vice chancellor for translational medicine and science director at the Rutgers Institute for Translational Medicine.

Overall, according to findings published in the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology*, these injectable medications provided significant relief. Patients starting biologics during the study period experienced a 58% reduction in exacerbations, and 89% of those who used biologics at any point during the study period continued to do so at the end.

Some 324 patients switched medications at least once during the study period—most commonly because their symptoms worsened on the first [medication](#) or because initially strong effects waned over time—and their strategy was rewarded, the researchers found. Switching medications was consistently associated with a reduction in exacerbations.

"The available products aren't all me-too drugs," Panettieri said. "They work in a variety of ways, so it makes [sense](#) that different medications would work for different people."

**More information:** Reynold A. Panettieri et al, Biologic Use and Outcomes Among Adults with Severe Asthma Treated by United States Subspecialists, *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.anai.2022.06.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anai.2022.06.012)

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