Dexamethasone

MEDICATION

THE DRUG

Class: corticosteroid

Binds to the glucocorticoid receptor, inhibiting pro-inflammatory signals

Immediate effects: decreased vasodilation and decreased cell permeability

Long term (hours to days): changes to gene expression for a long-term anti-inflammatory response

USE IT FOR

- Asthma
- COPD

DON'T GIVE / CAUTION

- Hypersensitivity
- Precautions: none listed on the page

DOSE

Adult: 16 mg — IV preferred; nebulized if IV not possible

Peds: Not stated on the page

Repeat: Not stated on the page

WATCH FOR

- Hyperglycemia, hyperkalemia, nausea/vomiting, stomach upset, headache, dizziness, anxiety, tremors

PEARLS

- Onset 1 hour; peak 1 hour; half-life hours to days (per the page's pharmacokinetics panel)
- Called Decadron on the page's graphics

Take Home Message:

Dexamethasone 16 mg, IV preferred, shuts down inflammatory signaling in asthma and COPD.