



**Asthma
Australia**

**This brochure has been developed
for the community by Asthma Australia.**

It provides useful information about:

- How to recognise asthma in a child
- How to keep a child safe and well
- How to access support
- Asthma first aid

**Ask your local Asthma Foundation about further
information including:**

- Asthma Basic Facts
- Asthma Medications

You can also ask about community education and
training programs.

**To find out more about asthma
contact your local Asthma Foundation:**

1800 645 130 (office hours)
asthmaaustralia.org.au

Translating and Interpreting Service: 131 450
Ask them to telephone your local
Asthma Foundation on 1800 645 130 (office hours)

All Asthma Australia information is endorsed by our Medical and Scientific
Advisory Committee and is consistent with the National Asthma Council
Australia clinical guidelines.

Asthma Australia information does not replace professional medical advice.
People should ask their doctor any questions about diagnosis and treatment.

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the Asthma Management Program.

Asthma First Aid

1

Sit the person upright

- Be calm and reassuring
- Do not leave them alone



2

Give medication

- Shake the blue reliever puffer*
- Use a spacer if you have one
- **Give 4 separate puffs
into the spacer**
- **Take 4 breaths from the
spacer after each puff**



*You can use a Bricanyl Turbuhaler if you do not
have access to a puffer and spacer

Giving blue reliever medication to someone who
doesn't have asthma is unlikely to harm them

3

Wait 4 minutes

- **If there is no improvement,
repeat step 2**



4

**If there is still no improvement
call emergency assistance (DIAL
000)**

- Tell the operator the person
is having an asthma attack
- Keep giving 4 puffs every
4 minutes while you wait
for emergency assistance



**Call emergency assistance
immediately (DIAL 000)
if the person's asthma
suddenly becomes worse**

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**Asthma
Australia**

Supported by the Australian Government

Asthma & Under 5s

for parents
and carers



**Asthma
Australia**



Children with asthma

One in nine Australian children has asthma. It is one of the most common reasons children visit the doctor and go to hospital.

Children of smoking parents are about twice as likely to have symptoms of asthma before they are five years old.

You can learn how to recognise and manage a child's asthma to keep them safe and well.

How do I know if a child has asthma?

Your information can help a doctor decide if a child has asthma. The doctor will ask about the child and the family's asthma and allergy history. Tests used to diagnose asthma (lung function tests) are not suitable for children under eight years. Describing the child's symptoms to the doctor is important.

Symptoms

Young children with asthma can have a range of symptoms. Children describe these symptoms in different ways, for example:

- Sore tummy
- Sore chest
- 'Frog' in their throat

And you might notice symptoms such as:

- Breathlessness
- Wheezing
- Persistent cough – often at night, early in the morning or during/after activity.

Triggers

Young children with asthma have sensitive airways. Their airways react to triggers. You may notice a child has an increase in symptoms after being exposed to a trigger, for example, after being outside on a cold night, you notice persistent coughing. The cold night air is the trigger. Not all children have the same triggers.

If possible, make a note of when the child's symptoms appear worse and what you think may have triggered their asthma. Being able to identify the child's triggers can sometimes help you plan to avoid them. It can also help you and the doctor make sure a child has the best asthma plan.

Do we know what causes asthma?

It is not fully understood why children develop asthma, though people with asthma often have a family history of asthma, eczema and hayfever (allergic rhinitis).

Do children grow out of asthma?

At this time, there is no way of predicting if a child will continue to have asthma. Children are more likely to continue to have asthma into adulthood if they:

- Have allergies
- Are female
- Have a parent, brother or sister with asthma
- Are exposed to cigarette smoke
- Are overweight or obese
- Have severe, persistent asthma.

The important thing to remember is that if you understand asthma, you can help a child stay safe and well so they don't miss out on activities.



Medication

The doctor might suggest asthma medication to see if this improves the child's symptoms.

The type of medication will depend on:

- How frequently the child has symptoms
- How unwell they become with asthma.

All children with asthma should have a blue reliever puffer. Some children only need to take this medication to relieve symptoms now and again.

Others also need to take medication (preventers) to prevent and/or reduce asthma symptoms. Preventers are used every day, even when the child is well. This can be for a set period, for example over winter, or all year round.

Always keep a blue reliever puffer, a spacer, and mask (if needed) with the child.

Devices

There is a range of devices for taking asthma medications. Young children require a small spacer, to help get the medication into their lungs. Very young children also need a mask.

Ask the doctor, pharmacist or your local Asthma Foundation:

- What spacers are available?
- How do I care for the spacer?
- Does the child need a mask as well?
- For practical ideas to encourage the child to take their asthma medication.

Asthma plans

It is important to have an up to date written asthma action plan. Your plan explains what medications your child needs to take for his/her asthma, and what to do if asthma symptoms worsen, including how to manage asthma during a cold or flu.

What do people caring for a child with asthma need?

It is important that anyone caring for a child knows he/she has asthma and is provided with:

- The child's asthma plan written by their doctor
- An Asthma First Aid Plan (there is a copy in this pamphlet)
- An in-date blue reliever puffer, a spacer, and mask (if needed)
- Preventer medication – if the child is in care at the time of day that this is given.

Make sure the carer knows that if the child's asthma is getting worse, they need to:

- Follow the child's asthma plan, or
- Follow the standard Asthma First Aid Plan if the child's own asthma plan is not available.

Anyone can get asthma first aid information and training from their local Asthma Foundation.