



**Simple solutions for severe reactions**

# ASTHMA

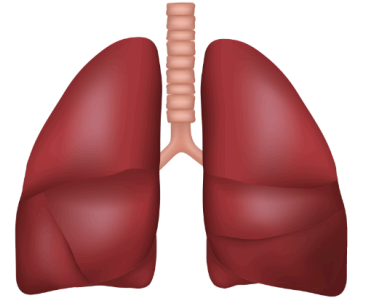


# What is Asthma?

- ^ Asthma is common lung condition that causes breathing difficulties
- ^ It affects people of all ages and often starts in childhood, although it can also develop in adulthood
- ^ Asthma is the most common chronic disease among children
- ^ There's currently no cure, but there are simple treatments that can help keep the symptoms under control to try and reduce the impact on patients lives
- ^ The main symptoms of asthma are
  - ^ **Wheezing** (a whistling sound when breathing)
  - ^ **Breathlessness**
  - ^ **Tight chest**, which may feel like a band is tightening around it
  - ^ **Coughing**
- ^ Symptoms can sometimes get increasingly worse. This is known as an asthma attack.

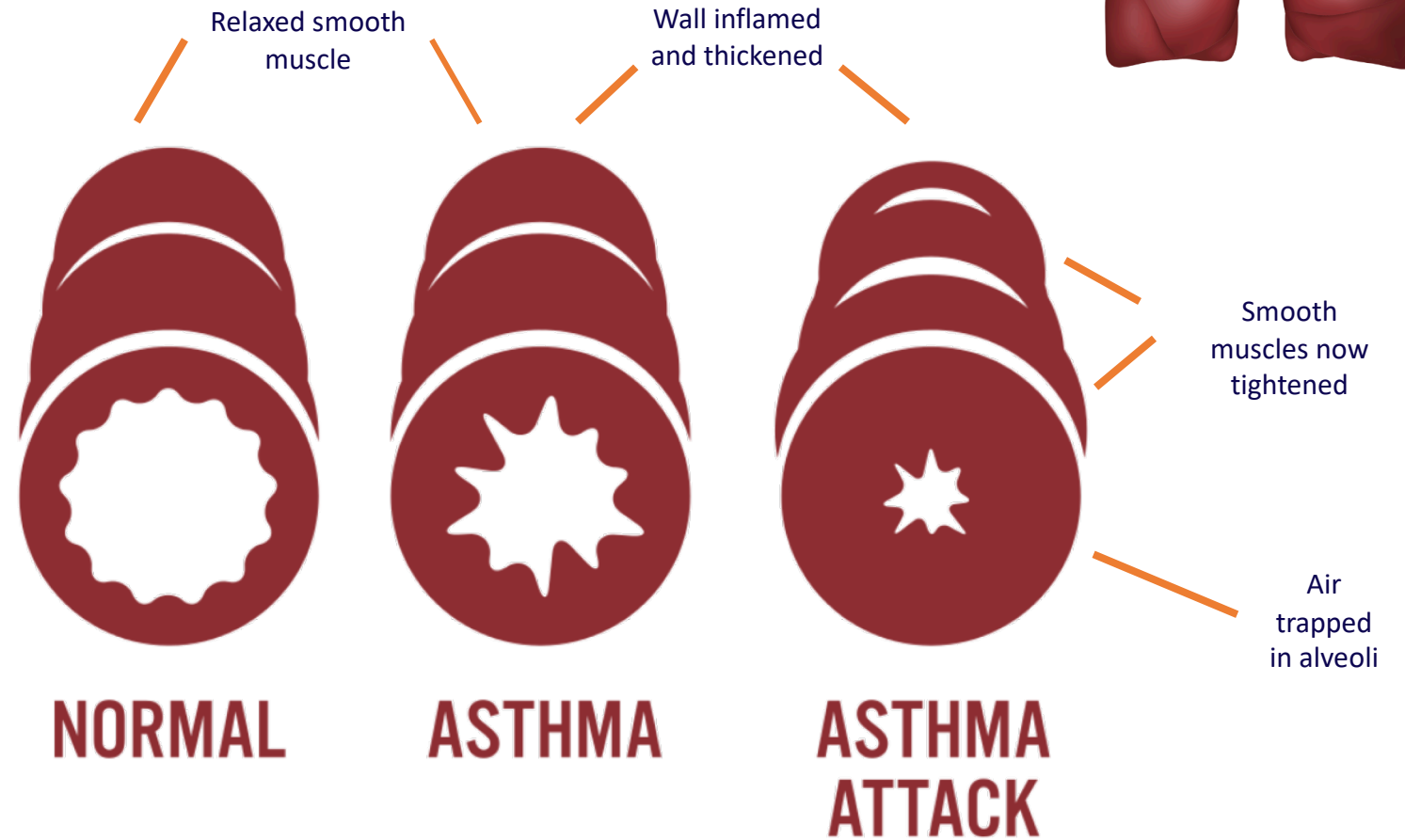


# What is Asthma?



**Airways become smaller due to:**

- ^ Underlying inflammation or swelling
- ^ Increased mucus production
- ^ Contraction of muscles around the airways or bronchospasm



# Asthma Triggers - Allergic

- ^ Animal dander
- ^ Dust mites
- ^ Moulds
- ^ Pollen
- ^ Food
- ^ Latex





# Asthma Triggers – Non allergic

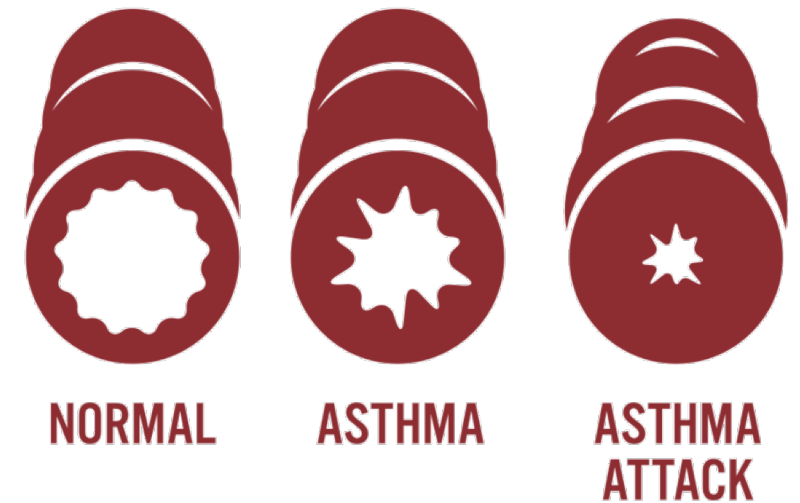
- ^ Smoking tobacco / second hand smoke
- ^ Infections
- ^ Poor air quality / air pollution / Fumes
- ^ Exercise
- ^ Stress
- ^ Hormones



# Asthma Attack – The Signs

**Signs that you are / maybe having an asthma attack and need help immediately include:**

- ^ Reliever inhaler (blue) doesn't help with symptom control
- ^ Symptoms are getting worse
  - ^ Severe wheezing
  - ^ Tightness in chest
  - ^ Too breathless to speak
  - ^ Spasmodic cough
  - ^ Rapid breathing, becoming faster, not slowing down
- ^ Pale and sweaty face
- ^ Blue lips and or fingernails



# What to do in an Asthma Attack



1. Sit up straight try to keep calm and take slow steady breaths (panicking could exacerbate symptoms)



1. Take one puff of the reliever inhaler( usually blue) every 30-60 seconds up to 10 puffs



1. If feeling worse at any point or don't feel better after 10 puffs call 999 and ask for an ambulance



1. Repeat step 2 after 15 minutes while your waiting for an ambulance

Take the details of your medicines or Personal Action Plan to Hospital if possible

This advice is not for people on SMART or MART medicine regimes.

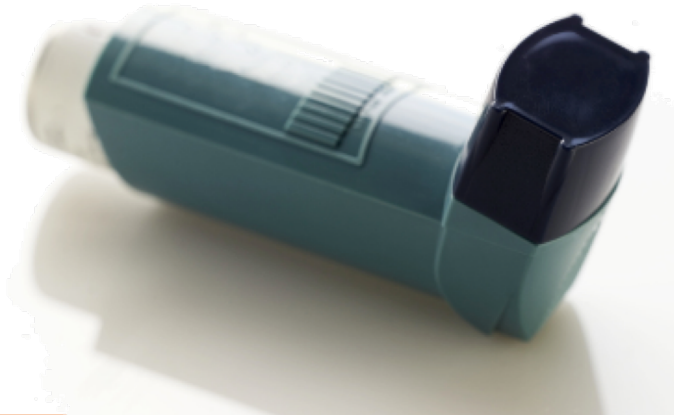


# Treatment (Reliever & Preventer)



# Asthma Treatments – Reliever

- ^ Normally a blue inhaler
- ^ Provides immediate relief, relaxes the muscles around the airways and decreases the narrowing of the airways
- ^ Relief from symptoms
- ^ Used to treat asthma attacks



# Asthma Treatments - Preventers

- ^ Used for the long term treatment and prevention of asthma symptoms
- ^ Prevents lung inflammation
- ^ Must be taken for several days before positive effects can be noticed
- ^ Will not be an effective treatment during an asthma attack





# Children's Asthma Action Plan

All children with asthma (and/or their parents or carers) should be offered self-management education which should include a written personalised Asthma Action Plan and be supported with regular asthma reviews by a Healthcare Professional .

**My asthma triggers:**  
List the things that make your asthma worse and what you can do to help

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**I will see my doctor or asthma nurse at least once a year (but more if I need to)**  
Date I got my asthma plan: \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of my next asthma review:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Doctor/asthma nurse contact details:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Parents – get the most from your child's action plan**

- **Take a photo** and keep it on your mobile (and your child's mobile if they have one)
- **Stick a copy** on your fridge door
- **Share** your child's action plan with school

Learn more about what to do during an asthma attack [www.asthma.org.uk/advice/asthma-attacks](http://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/asthma-attacks)

**Questions? Ask Asthma UK's nurses:**

Call on **0300 222 5800** (9am-5pm; Mon-Fri)

Or message on **WhatsApp** **07378 606 728** (9am-5pm; Mon-Fri)

**My Asthma Plan**

**1 My usual asthma medicines**

- My preventer inhaler is called \_\_\_\_\_ and its colour is \_\_\_\_\_
- I take \_\_\_\_\_ puff/s of my preventer inhaler in the morning and \_\_\_\_\_ puff/s at night. I do this every day even if I feel well.
- Other asthma medicines I take every day: \_\_\_\_\_
- My reliever inhaler is called \_\_\_\_\_ and its colour is \_\_\_\_\_

I take \_\_\_\_\_ puff/s of my reliever inhaler when I wheeze or cough, my chest hurts or it's hard to breathe.

- My best peak flow is \_\_\_\_\_

**If I need my blue inhaler to do any sport or activity, I need to see my doctor or asthma nurse.**

**2 My asthma is getting worse if...**

- I wheeze or cough, my chest hurts or it's hard to breathe, **or**
- I need my reliever inhaler (usually blue) three or more times a week, **or**
- My peak flow is less than \_\_\_\_\_, **or**
- I'm waking up at night because of my asthma (this is an important sign and I will book a next day appointment)

**If my asthma gets worse, I will:**

- Take my preventer medicines as normal
- And also take \_\_\_\_\_ puff/s of my blue reliever inhaler every four hours
- See my doctor or nurse urgently if I don't feel better within 24 hours

**URGENT!** "If your blue reliever inhaler isn't lasting for four hours you are having an asthma attack and you need to take emergency action now (see section 3)"

**Other things to do if my asthma is getting worse**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Remember to use my spacer with my inhaler if I have one.

(If I don't have one, I'll check with my doctor or nurse if it would help me)

**3 I'm having an asthma attack if...**

- My reliever inhaler isn't helping or I need it more than every four hours, **or**
- I can't talk, walk or eat easily, **or**
- I'm finding it hard to breathe, **or**
- I'm coughing or wheezing a lot or my chest is tight/hurts, **or**
- My peak flow is less than \_\_\_\_\_

**If I have an asthma attack, I will:**

- Call for help**
- Sit up** — don't lie down. Try to be calm.
- Take one puff of my reliever inhaler (with my spacer if I have it) **every 30 to 60 seconds** up to a total of 10 puffs.
- If I don't have my blue inhaler, or it's not helping, I need to call 999 straightaway.**
- While I wait for an ambulance I can use my blue reliever again, every 30 to 60 seconds (up to 10 puffs) if I need to.

**Even if I start to feel better, I don't want this to happen again, so I need to see my doctor or asthma nurse today.**

**My Asthma Plan**

Your asthma plan tells you what medicines to take to stay well

And what to do when your asthma gets worse

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Always keep your reliever inhaler (usually blue) and your spacer with you.

You might need them if your asthma gets worse.

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**ARK**

# Adult Asthma Action Plan

Regardless of age all people with asthma (and/or their parents or carers) should be offered self-management education which should include a written personalised Asthma Action Plan and be supported with regular asthma reviews by a Healthcare Professional .

## My asthma triggers

Taking my asthma medicine each day will help reduce my reaction to these triggers. Avoiding them where possible will also help.

People with allergies need to be extra careful as attacks can be more severe.

## My asthma review

I should have at least one routine asthma review every year. **I will bring:**

- My action plan to see if it needs updating.
- Any inhalers and spacers I have, to check I'm using them correctly and in the best way.
- Any questions about my asthma and how to cope with it.

Next asthma review date: \_\_\_\_\_

## GP/asthma nurse contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Out-of-hours contact number

(ask your GP surgery who to call when they are closed)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_



HA1080216 © 2016 Asthma UK registered charity number in England and Wales 802264 and in Scotland SC039322. Last reviewed and updated 2018; next review 2019.

\*Adams et al; Factors associated with hospital admissions and repeat emergency department visits for adults with asthma; Thorax 2000;55:566-573

## How to use it

Your written asthma action plan can help you stay on top of your asthma.

To get the most from it, you could...

**1 Put it somewhere easy for you and your family to find** – like your fridge door, noticeboard, or bedside table.

**2 Keep a photo of it on your mobile phone or tablet** – so you can check it wherever you are. You can also send it to a family member or friend, so they know what to do if your asthma symptoms get worse.

**3 Check in with it regularly** – put a note on your calendar, or a monthly reminder on your phone to read it through. Are you remembering to use your day-to-day asthma medicines? Do you know what to do if your symptoms get worse?

**4 Take it to every healthcare appointment about your asthma** – including A&E/consultant. Ask your GP or asthma nurse to update it if their advice for you changes.

## Get more advice & support from Asthma UK:

Speak to a specialist asthma nurse about managing your asthma on: 0300 222 5800

Get news, advice and download information packs at: [www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk)

Follow us on Facebook for news and tips about your asthma: [www.facebook.com/asthmauk](https://www.facebook.com/asthmauk)

Follow us on Twitter for news and tips about your asthma: [@asthmauk](https://twitter.com/asthmauk)

The step-by-step guide that helps you stay on top of your asthma

## Your asthma action plan

Fill this in with your GP or nurse



Name and date: \_\_\_\_\_



Any asthma questions? Call our friendly helpline nurses  
**0300 222 5800**  
(9am – 5pm; Mon – Fri)  
[www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk)



## Every day asthma care:

### My asthma is being managed well:

- With this daily routine I should expect/aim to have no symptoms.
- If I've not had any symptoms or needed my reliever inhaler for at least 12 weeks, I can ask my GP or asthma nurse to review my medicines in case they can reduce the dose.
- My personal best peak flow is:

### My daily asthma routine:

My **preventer** inhaler (insert name/colour):

I need to take my **preventer** inhaler every day even when I feel well

I take  puff(s) in the morning  
and  puff(s) at night.

My **reliever** inhaler (insert name/colour):

I take my **reliever** inhaler only if I need to  
I take  puff(s) of my reliever inhaler if any of these things happen:

- ★ I'm wheezing
- ★ My chest feels tight
- ★ I'm finding it hard to breathe
- ★ I'm coughing

Other medicines and devices (eg spacers) I use for my asthma every day:



## When I feel worse:

### My asthma is getting worse if I'm experiencing any of these:

- My symptoms are coming back (wheeze, tightness in my chest, feeling breathless, cough).
- I am waking up at night.
- My symptoms are interfering with my usual day-to-day activities (eg at work, exercising).
- I am using my reliever inhaler three times a week or more.
- My peak flow drops to below:

**URGENT! If you need your reliever inhaler more than every four hours, you're having an asthma attack and you need to take emergency action now.**

### What I can do to get on top of my asthma now:

If I haven't been using my preventer inhaler, I'll start using it regularly again or if I have been using it...

Increase my preventer inhaler dose to  puffs  times a day until my symptoms have gone and my peak flow is back to my personal best.

Take my reliever inhaler as needed (up to  puffs every four hours).

I carry my reliever inhaler with me when I'm out.

**URGENT! See a doctor or nurse within 24 hours if you get worse at any time or you haven't improved after seven days.**

Other advice from my GP about what to do if my asthma is worse (eg SMART/MART or rescue steroid tablets):



## In an asthma attack:

### I'm having an asthma attack if I'm experiencing any of these:

- My reliever inhaler is not helping or I need it more than every four hours.
- I find it difficult to walk or talk.
- I find it difficult to breathe.
- I'm wheezing a lot or I have a very tight chest or I'm coughing a lot.
- My peak flow is below:

## What to do in an asthma attack

**1 Sit up straight** – try to keep calm.

**2 Take one puff of your reliever inhaler (usually blue)** every 30 - 60 seconds, up to a maximum of 10 puffs.

**3 If you feel worse** at any point OR you don't feel better after 10 puffs call 999 for an ambulance.

**4 Repeat step 2 after 15 minutes** while you're waiting for an ambulance.

### After an asthma attack:

See your GP within 48 hours to make sure you're not at risk of another attack. If you get worse see them urgently. Finish any medicines they prescribe you, even if you start to feel better. If you don't improve after treatment, see your GP urgently.

What to do in an asthma attack if I'm on SMART/MART:

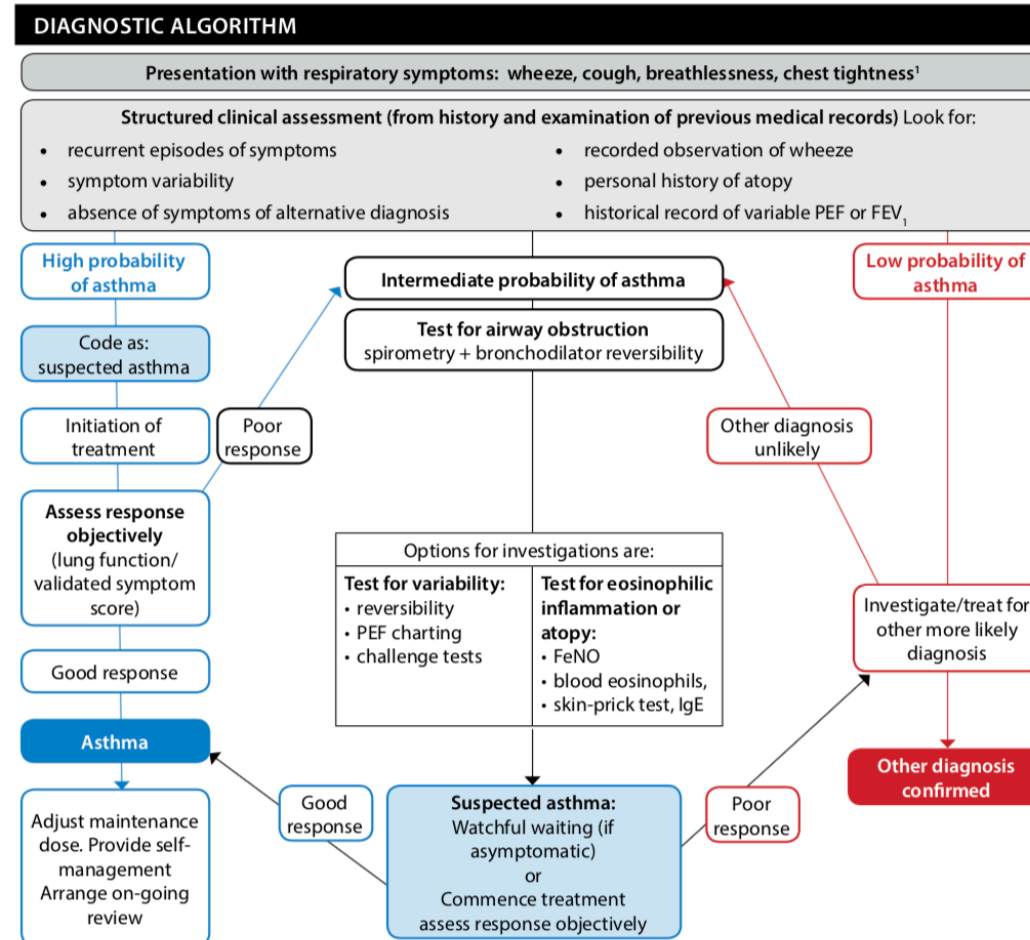




# Guidelines (UK)



# BTS / SIGN Asthma Guideline



<sup>1</sup> In children under 5 years and others unable to undertake spirometry in whom there is a high or intermediate probability of asthma, the options are monitored initiation of treatment or watchful waiting according to the assessed probability of asthma.



# Current Legislation



# MHRA Regulations 2014



***AS of 1st October 2014 the Human Medicines (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2014 will allow schools to buy salbutamol inhalers, without a prescription, for use in emergencies.***

- ^ For emergency use in children who have been prescribed an inhaler as reliever medication
- ^ For use should the pupils own device not be immediately available or not working
- ^ Guidance applies to all primary & secondary schools

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-asthma-inhalers-for-use-in-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-asthma-inhalers-for-use-in-schools)







Simple solutions for severe reactions



**Asthma** is a chronic respiratory condition that affects the airways causing inflammation and narrowing inside the lung, restricting air supply. It is estimated by the WHO that 250,000 people die prematurely each year from asthma.