

Asthma emergency

First aid fact sheet



An asthma emergency is potentially life-threatening.

- Most people who suffer asthma attacks are aware of their asthma and should have an action plan and medication.
- In an emergency, or if a patient does not have their own reliever, use another person's reliever (if permitted under local state or territory regulations), or one from a first aid kit.
- If the patient is having difficulty breathing but has not previously had an asthma attack, follow **WHAT TO DO**

Signs & Symptoms

Mild to moderate asthma attack

- increasingly soft to loud wheeze
- persistent cough
- minor to obvious difficulty breathing

Asthma emergency

- symptoms get worse very quickly
- little or no relief from inhaler
- severe shortness of breath, focused only on breathing
- unable to speak normally
- pallor, sweating
- progressively more anxious, subdued or panicky
- blue lips, face, earlobes, fingernails
- loss of consciousness



What to do

1. Follow DRSABCD.
2. Help the patient to sit down in a comfortable position.
3. Reassure and stay with the patient.
4. If requested, help the patient to follow their action plan.

How to give medication (4 : 4 : 4)

Use a spacer if available.

1. Give 4 separate puffs of blue/grey reliever puffer:
 - shake the inhaler
 - give 1 puff
 - take 4 breaths
 - repeat until 4 puffs have been given.
2. Wait 4 minutes
3. If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above.
4. If the patient still cannot breath normally, **call triple zero (000)** for an ambulance.
5. Keep giving 4 puffs every 4 minutes (as above) until medical aid arrives.

In a medical emergency call Triple Zero (000)

Danger **R**esponse **S**end for help **A**irway **B**reathing **C**PR **D**efibrillation

You could save a life with first aid training

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