

Asthma Emergency

First Aid Fact Sheet



An asthma emergency is potentially life-threatening.

- People who suffer asthma should have an action plan and medication.
- In an emergency if a patient does not have their own reliever, use another person's (if permitted under local state or territory regulations), or one from a first aid kit.

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
- blue lips, face, earlobes, fingernails



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)

You could save a life with First Aid Training

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