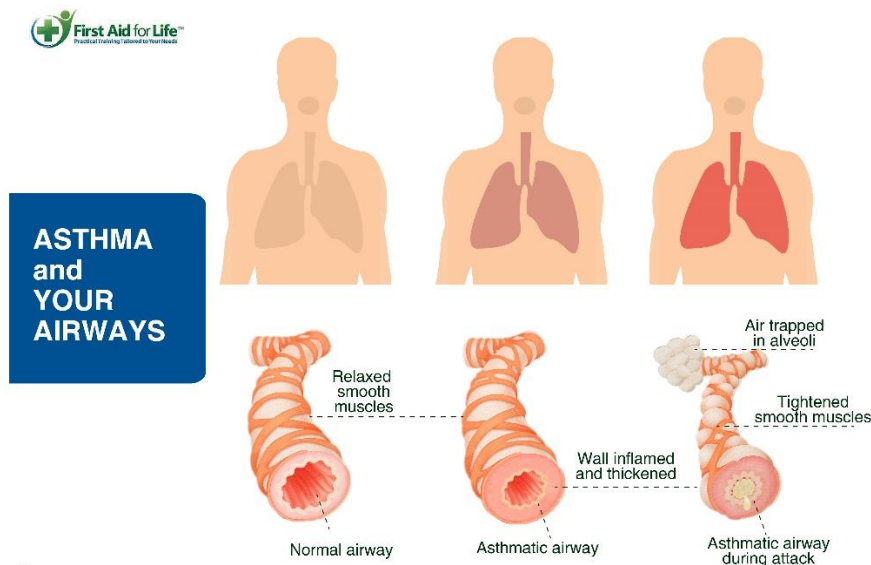


Asthma

Asthma affects 1 in 11 children. Asthma is a manageable, but not curable disease that affects the airways and causes them to go into spasm, making it extremely difficult to breathe.



Most people are able to control their symptoms with their inhalers and it does not prevent them fully participating in all elements of life. However, Asthma is a serious condition and sadly people can die from asthma attacks.

Asthmatic sufferers are likely to understand their particular triggers. They should always carry their inhalers with them and it is the blue reliever inhaler that they need in an emergency.

Common asthma triggers:



- Allergens
- Respiratory infections
- Strong odors
- Cold air / temperature change
- Exercise
- Stress and emotions
- Pollutants
- Food additives
- Gastric reflux
- Tobacco smoke
- Medication

Symptoms of asthma:

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Tightness in the chest
- Difficulty breathing out
- An increase in sticky mucus and phlegm

Not everyone will get all these symptoms.

If someone is having an asthma attack:



HOW TO DEAL with an ASTHMA ATTACK

Step 1

Help the casualty to take their usual dose of reliever (usually blue) inhaler immediately, preferably through a spacer.



Step 2

Sit the casualty upright
Get them to take slow steady breaths
Keep calm and try to keep them calm
Do not leave them unattended

Have the symptoms improved immediately?

No

Yes

Step 3

Continue to give two puffs of reliever inhaler every two minutes, up to 10 puffs

Continue to sit with the casualty until they are feeling completely well and can go back to previous activity

Step 4

If the casualty does not start to feel better after taking the reliever inhaler as above or if you are worried at any time call 999



If the casualty is a child, parents/carers should be informed



Step 5

If an ambulance does not arrive within 10 minutes repeat step 3 while you wait

If the casualty is a child, parents/carers should be informed

Signs of an asthma attack can include any of these

- Coughing
- Being short of breath
- Wheezy breathing
- Being unusually quiet
- Tightness in their chest - some children express this as tummy ache

1. Be calm and reassuring. Panic can increase the severity of an attack.
2. Get them to take one to two puffs of their reliever inhaler (usually blue). Use a spacer device if available.
3. Sit them down, loosen any tight clothing and encourage them to take slow, steady breaths.
4. If they do not start to feel better, they should take 2 more puffs of their inhaler every 2 minutes, to a maximum of 10 puffs.
5. If they do not feel better or begin to feel worse **call 999 immediately**.
6. They can keep taking the reliever inhaler while waiting for the ambulance to arrive.

NOTE:

- Do **not** take them outside for fresh air if it is cold. Extremely cold air can make symptoms worse.
- Encouraging someone to sit upright is generally helpful when dealing with breathing problems: sitting the wrong way around on a chair may be a good position for them.



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