

Information sheet



For Bushfire Volunteers with Asthma

This Information Sheet provides some useful information on what you can do to avoid or reduce the impact of bushfire smoke on the health of volunteers working in the affected regions.

Many volunteers working in bushfire affected regions have an increased risk of asthma. These people are likely to have prolonged, intensive exposure to fire, heat and smoke. Bushfire smoke and increased air pollution from fires can trigger asthma symptoms, such as **wheezing, coughing, chest tightness or shortness of breath**.

If you have asthma, be aware of the risk and be prepared. Symptoms can occur for several days after smoke is inhaled, so people with asthma need to be vigilant with their management

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The following precautions can help you minimise adverse effects of bushfire smoke:

- Always follow your personal written Asthma Action Plan. These instructions help you and your colleagues recognise signs of worsening asthma, and what action to take to prevent further deterioration.
- Ensure other volunteers around you know you have asthma in case you need help.
- Always have your blue reliever medication on hand and continue to use your preventer medication as well, as detailed in your written Asthma Action Plan.
- Make sure to take plenty of breaks away from smoke conditions and rest indoors wherever possible.
- If you develop symptoms such as coughing or wheezing, chest tightness or shortness of breath, seek medical assistance immediately.
- If your reliever medication isn't reducing your asthma symptoms, start Asthma First Aid* and seek medical attention without delay.

* Asthma First Aid Plan

Step 1: Sit the person upright – be calm and reassuring, do not leave the person alone.

Step 2: Without delay give 4 separate puffs of a blue reliever puffer. This medication is best given one puff at a time via a spacer device. Ask the person to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff of medication.

Step 3: Wait 4 minutes.

Step 4: If there is little or no improvement, repeat Steps 2 & 3. If there is still no improvement, call an ambulance immediately, DIAL 000. Continuously repeat steps 2 and 3 while waiting for the ambulance.

Refer to the next page for more detail on the Asthma Action Plan.

Further Information

For further information talk to your doctor, or contact The Asthma Foundation of SA on **1800 645 130** or **www.asthmasa.org.au**

Asthma First Aid

- 1 Sit the person upright –**
be calm and reassuring,
do not leave them alone.



- 2 Without delay give 4 separate puffs of a blue reliever puffer.**

The medication is best given one puff at a time via a spacer device. Ask the person to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff of medication.



- 3 Wait 4 minutes.**



- 4 If there is little or no improvement, repeat steps 2 and 3.**

If there is still no improvement, call an ambulance immediately, DIAL 000.

Continuously repeat steps 2 and 3 while waiting for the ambulance.



If the person's condition suddenly deteriorates or you are concerned at any time call an ambulance immediately.