





emergency asthma first aid

<p>Step 1. Sit the person upright to provide better air entry to the lungs. Remain calm and provide reassurance.</p> 	<p>Step 2. Give 4 puffs of a blue reliever puffer (<i>Ventolin, Asmol Epaq or Airomir,</i>) one puff at a time, preferably via a spacer device*. Ask the person to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff of the blue reliever puffer.</p> 
<p>Step 3. Wait 4 minutes for the medication to take effect.</p> 	<p>Step 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), Continue to repeat steps 2 and 3 until the ambulance arrives.</p> 

Use puffer alone if a spacer is not available. A Bricanyl Turbuhaler does not require a spacer, but can also be used in Asthma First Aid.

Emergency Asthma First Aid

In the management of asthma, reliever medication may be required to relieve the symptoms of asthma. An asthma attack needs to be taken seriously, it can be life threatening.

Reliever medication works within 4-5 minutes and relaxes the muscle that has tightened around the small breathing tubes resulting in wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath and tightness in the chest. The medication should give relief for approximately 3-4 hours.

Asthma Symptoms that are not relieved by a reliever medication can lead on to an asthma emergency.

A Mild asthma attack *may* appear as:

- Cough (dry or moist)
- Wheeze

- Tightness in the chest
- Shortness of breath, but able to speak in sentences

A Moderate asthma attack may appear as:

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Tightness in the chest
- Shortness of breath but sentences are shorter

A Severe asthma attack may appear as:

- Little or no improvement after using reliever medication
- Gasping for breath
- Severe chest tightness

- Inability to speak more than one or two words per breath
- Feeling distressed and/or anxious
- Sucking in of the throat or skin between the ribs
- Blue colouring around the lips
- Pale & sweaty

If a person shows severe asthma symptoms call an ambulance (Dial 000) immediately and follow the Emergency Asthma First Aid Plan.

As well as the symptoms above, young children may appear restless, unable to settle, become lethargic like a floppy rag-doll, and may have problems eating & drinking due to shortness of breath.

All asthma attacks need to be treated, regardless of whether they are mild, moderate or severe. An asthma attack can be treated by following the Emergency Asthma First Aid Plan.

Call an Ambulance immediately if:

- The asthma attack is severe
- There is little or no improvement during or following the Emergency Asthma First Aid Plan
- You are worried about the person's condition
- You need help.

For more information contact the Breathe Better Health Line 1800 645 130, go to www.asthmasa.org.au or visit the Breathe Better Centre at 300 South Road Hilton.

