

Asthma in Children

Children's Services

What is asthma?

Asthma affects airways, the small tubes that carry air in and out of lungs. With asthma the airways become red and swollen and there is an increase in production of sticky mucus. This causes the airways to tighten and makes it more difficult for the child to breathe.

In Britain, asthma is fairly common, affecting about one child in seven.

Asthma triggers:

The things that make airways red and swollen are called triggers. There are many trigger factors and each individual is different.

The most common triggers are:

- Exercise
- Cold weather
- Sensitivity to house dust mite, animal fur, grass or tree pollen
- Viruses, including the common cold
- Air pollution, especially tobacco smoke.

What are the symptoms?

Earliest stages of asthma feel like a mild breathing difficulty. A small child probably won't tell you about this. Other symptoms are coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest feeling tight.

If talking is difficult then the attack is severe – urgent medical advice is needed.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- **Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111**
- **Keep the environment clean and tidy**
- **Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.**

How is asthma treated?

This is usually given by inhaler. Inhalers take the medicine straight to the lungs where it is needed. This makes the treatment work faster. Your child may sometimes be given a short course of steroids (prednisolone) by mouth. This helps to reduce the mucus secretion and swelling in the airways.

There are two main types of asthma inhalers:

1. Preventors: (usually brown, orange or purple colour)

Preventer inhalers help to stop the airways becoming red and swollen.

They take a few weeks to start working and need to be taken every day, even when the child is well. Your child should not stop taking preventer inhaler until your doctor tells you to.

Research over the years confirms the benefit of treatment over not doing so. The treatment is not addictive, nor will your child get 'used' to his treatment

2. Relievers (usually blue colour)

Reliever inhalers open up the airways in an attack to help breathing. Reliever inhaler work very quickly (within 5-10 minutes) and should last at least 3-4 hours. Your child should have the reliever inhaler if they start:

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Becoming breathless

Use of inhalers

Inhalers are best given by large volume spacer (chamber) as it ensures more medicine reaches the lungs. Younger children will need a mask fitted to the spacer. Older children may have different type of inhalers.

Is there anything I can do to help my child's asthma?

Giving any preventers regularly and use the reliever as soon as the asthma attack starts are the most important things a parent can do.

Cigarette smoke aggravates asthma. If you are a smoker yourself, consider giving up (ask your GP for more details).

You can use special house dust mite cover for the mattress and pillows.

Will my child get better?

The treatment very likely will help your child's asthma. Also, as children grow, in most cases the asthma also improves.

You must seek medical advice if your child is:

- Too breathless to talk / babble / feed
- Becomes drowsy or listless
- Reliever inhaler lasts less than 2 hours.

If so, give 10 puffs of reliever inhaler through spacer and call an ambulance.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。