

Important Points for Caregivers to Note

In young children asthma symptoms may become worse either very quickly (within a few hours) or slowly worsen over several days. In some children a change in behaviour may be an indication of worsening asthma eg.

Loss of appetite, quietness, or clinginess.

It is important for caregivers to be aware of these changes.

Be Aware of Worsening Asthma in these Situations

- When your child develops a cold
(This is a very common trigger in asthma)
- At the change of seasons
- Exposure to any of the triggers, which you know may worsen your child's asthma
- Playing outside on cold and/or windy days
- When excited or in stressful situations

Always continue with preventer medication as prescribed



For further information please contact your local asthma society



THE LUNG ASSOCIATION

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Asthma New Zealand/The Lung Association
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Asthma Emergency Action Plan for children under 5 years of age



Asthma in children can be controlled most of the time. This pamphlet is a guide for caregivers to follow when a child's asthma symptoms become more serious. You need to be able to recognise what is happening and know what action to take.



THE LUNG ASSOCIATION

Recognising an asthma attack and what to do

How to recognise

Mildly Worsening Asthma Symptoms

- Activity** Child continues with usual activities. May be a bit quieter than usual.
- Wheezing** Very slight.
Sometimes may only be heard by putting ear on child's chest.

Note: Wheezing may not occur in all children with worsening asthma

- Muscle Use** Muscle at front of neck may be going in and out slightly with each breath.
- Breathing** Breathing rate is normally between 20-30 breaths per minute. (Rate decreases as child gets older) May be slightly faster than usual.
- Cough** May be coughing more during the night or when running/jumping.
- Talking** No noticeable change from usual.

- What to do** Give 2 puffs of blue reliever inhaler via a spacer. If no improvement within 30 minutes give 6 puffs. If symptoms return or become worse within the next 4 hours contact Practice Nurse/GP or A & M Clinic for advice.



How to recognise

Moderately Worsening Asthma Symptoms

- Activity** Stopping to rest now and then. May have bursts of activity but still needs to rest more often than usual.
- Wheezing** "Whistle" sound may be heard when breathing out.
- Muscle Use** Muscle at front of neck sucking in and out with breathing. Area below ribs sucking in when breathing.
- Breathing** Breathing rate is noticeably faster than usual.
- Cough** May or may not cough at all.
- Talking** Needs to take a breath after 2-3 words or in the middle of a sentence.

- What to do** Give 6 puffs of blue reliever inhaler via a Spacer. If no improvement within 20 minutes repeat 6 puffs. If still no improvement within 20 minutes of 2nd lot of 6 puffs take the child to doctor or A & M Clinic **immediately**.

How to recognise

Severe Symptoms THIS IS A SERIOUS SITUATION

- Activity** Sitting very still, wanting to be cuddled/held. Not playing at all or normal activities severely reduced
- Wheezing** Obvious "whistle" heard when breathing **in** and **out**.
- Note:** **If at any time the wheeze disappears with no improvement in child's activity or breathing rate, dial 111 and ask for an ambulance. Give 6 puffs of blue inhaler via a spacer/mask every 5 minutes until ambulance arrives.**
- Muscle Use** Muscles at front of neck, the area just under ribs, and the area between ribs will be sucking in and out with breathing. Child may hunch over.
- Breathing** Breathing rate is very fast compared to usual.
- Talking** Needs to take a breath after one or two words or not talking at all.
- Colour** Lips and/or fingernails may look bluish

- What to do** **Take immediate action.** If you are alone Dial 111 immediately and ask for an ambulance. Give 6 puffs of blue reliever inhaler via spacer and mask and repeat every 5 minutes until seen by emergency services. If 2 people present, 1st person Dial 111 for ambulance and 2nd person administer 6 puffs or blue reliever inhaler