

What to do in an Asthma Attack



Common signs of an asthma attack are:

- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Tightness in the chest
- Being unusually quiet
- Difficulty speaking in full sentences
- Tummy ache (sometimes in younger children)

What to Do

- Keep Calm
- Encourage the child to sit down in the position they find most comfortable
- Assist the child to immediately take 1 puff of Reliever inhaler (usually blue) – preferably through a spacer
- Repeat Reliever treatment as symptoms may make inhaling ineffective
- If symptoms improve but do not completely disappear, assist with another dose of Reliever inhaler (**Reliever medicine is very safe**)

If there is No Immediate Improvement:

Continue to assist the child to take 1 puff of their Reliever inhaler every minute for 5 minutes, or until symptoms improve.

Never leave a pupil having an asthma attack

Call 999 Urgently if:

- There is no improvement in 5-10 minutes
- The child is too breathless / exhausted to speak
- The child's lips are blue
- The child says they are having a 'bad' attack
- The child is frightened by the attack
- You are in any doubt about the child

Continue to give the child 1 puff of their Reliever inhaler every minute until the ambulance or doctor arrives

After a Minor Asthma Attack

- Minor attacks should not interrupt the involvement of a pupil with asthma in school.
- When the pupil feels better they can return to school activities.
- The parents/carers must always be told if their child has had an asthma attack.

What to do in an Asthma Attack

Important things to remember in an Asthma Attack

- **Never leave a pupil having an asthma attack**
- If the pupil does not have their inhaler and/or spacer with them, send another teacher or pupil to their classroom or assigned room to get their spare inhaler and/or spacer.
- In an emergency situation school staff are required under common law, duty of care, to act like any reasonably prudent parent.
- **Reliever medicine is very safe.** During an asthma attack do not worry about a pupil overdosing.
- Send another pupil to get another teacher/adult if an ambulance needs to be called.
- Contact the pupil's parents or carers immediately after calling the ambulance/doctor.
- A member of staff should always accompany a pupil taken to hospital by ambulance and stay with them until their parent or carer arrives.
- Generally staff should not take pupils to hospital in their own car. However, in some situations it may be the best course of action.
- Another adult should always accompany anyone driving a pupil having an asthma attack to emergency services.

NB: Guidance from education authorities on emergency transport in private vehicles is different in each part of the UK. Your school should have a clear emergency procedure policy on if and when this is appropriate.