

Asthma Advice Sheet

How is your child?



Red

- Drowsy
- Has severe wheeze
- Unable to speak in sentences
- Unable to take fluids and is getting tired
- Is unable to respond with loss in consciousness
- Breathless, with heaving of the chest

You need urgent help

Ring 999 – you need help immediately. If you have a blue inhaler use it now, 1 puff per minute via spacer until the ambulance arrives.



Amber

- Wheezing and breathless
- Not responding to usual reliever treatment

You need to see or speak to a doctor or nurse today

Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 – dial 111



Green

- Requiring to use their reliever regularly throughout the day for cough or wheeze but is not breathing quickly
- Able to continue day to day activities
- Change in peak flow meter readings

You need to see a doctor or nurse to discuss your child's asthma.

Please ring for a non urgent appointment.

Some useful phone numbers and information



GP Surgery
(make a note of number here)

NHS 111

dial 111

available 24 hours
7 days a week

Shropshire Walk-in Centre
Located next to A&E at
Royal Shrewsbury Hospital
Open from 8am to 8pm,
7 days a week including
bank holidays

For online health condition advice visit: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Asthma UK website www.asthma.org.uk/advice/child/

All advice sheets can be found on Shropshire CCG Website; <http://www.shropshireccg.nhs.uk/>

All advice sheets can be found on Telford and Wrekin CCG Website; <https://www.telfordccg.nhs.uk/>

Asthma Advice Sheet – self care

What is asthma?

Asthma is caused by inflammation of the airways. These are the small tubes, called bronchi, which carry air in and out of the lungs. If you have asthma, the bronchi will be inflamed and more sensitive than normal.

Asthma can start at any age, but it most commonly starts in childhood. At least 1 in 10 children, and 1 in 20 adults, have asthma.

In an asthma attack the muscles of the air passages in the lungs go into spasm and the linings of the airways swell. As a result, the airways become narrowed and breathing becomes difficult.

What causes asthma in children?

In young pre-school children, wheezing is usually brought on by a viral infection – causing a cold, ear or throat infection. Some people call this ‘viral-induced wheeze’ or ‘wheezy bronchitis’, whilst others call it asthma. Most children will grow out of it, as they get to school age.

In older children, viruses are still the commonest cause of wheezing. But other specific triggers may also cause an asthma attack such as:

- ⌘ an allergy eg animals
- ⌘ pollens and mould particularly in hayfever season
- ⌘ cigarette smoke
- ⌘ extremes of temperature
- ⌘ stress
- ⌘ exercise (However, sport and exercise are good for you if you have asthma. If necessary, an inhaler can be used before exercise to prevent symptoms from developing)

Your child MAY BE having an asthma attack if any of the following happens:

- ⌘ Their reliever isn't helping or lasting over four hours
- ⌘ Their symptoms are getting worse (cough, breathlessness, wheeze or tight chest)
- ⌘ They are too breathless or it's difficult to speak, eat or sleep
- ⌘ Their breathing may get faster and they feel like they can't get your breath in properly
- ⌘ Young children may complain of a tummy ache.

What to do if your child has an asthma attack:

1. Give your child one to two puffs of their reliever inhaler (usually blue), immediately – use a spacer if they need it.
2. Get your child to sit down and try to take slow, steady breaths. Keep them calm and reassure them
3. If they do not start to feel better, give them two puffs of their reliever inhaler (one puff at a time) every two minutes. They can take up to ten puffs
4. If they do not feel better after taking their inhaler as above, or if you are worried at any time, call 999.
5. If an ambulance does not arrive within 10 minutes and they are still feeling unwell, repeat step 3.

If your child's symptoms improve and you do not need to call 999, you still need to take them to see a doctor or asthma nurse within 24 hours of an asthma attack.

Most people who have asthma attacks will have warning signs for a few days before the attack. These include having to use the blue reliever inhaler more often; changes in peak flow meter readings, and increased symptoms, such as waking up in the night. Don't ignore these warning signs, as they indicate that your child's asthma control is poor and they risk having a severe attack.

