

Information for Parents / Carers:

Caring for your child with Asthma / Wheeze



What is asthma?

If you have asthma, the bronchi (the airways in the lungs) 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/wheeze attack the muscle of the air passages in the lungs go into spasm and the lining of the airways swell. As a result, the airways become narrower 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'. Most children will grow out of it, as they get to school age. Children who have ongoing/recurrent symptoms may be given the diagnosis of asthma.

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 e.g. animals
- Pollens and mould particularly in hay-fever 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 (blue inhaler) 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 their breath properly
- Young children may complain of a tummy ache.

What to do if your child has an asthma attack:

1. Immediately give your child 2-4 puffs of their reliever inhaler (usually blue). Remember to use a spacer
2. Help your child to sit down and ask them to take slow, steady breaths. Keep them calm and reassure them
3. If they do not start to feel better, give them 2-4 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 start to feel better after taking their inhaler as above, or if you are worried at any time call 999
5. If your child continues to feel unwell while awaiting the ambulance, continue to give a puff a minute until symptoms improve or ambulance arrives

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 an asthma attack 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.

It is an emergency if your child is



- Breathing very fast and using their neck or tummy muscles to breathe.
- Too breathless to talk, eat or drink.
- Tired, pale or blue around the lips.

Action

- **You must seek medical advice immediately – dial 999**

Whilst you are waiting for the ambulance give your child 10 puffs of the blue inhaler using the spacer. You can continue to give 10 puffs every minute until help arrives.

Asthma/Wheeze Advice Guide

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 of consciousness
- Breathless, with heaving of the chest

You need urgent help

Please phone 999 or go to the nearest Accident and Emergency



Amber

- Wheezing and breathless
- Not responding to usual reliever treatment
- Needing reliever treatment more than every 4 hours

You need to contact 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 reading

Self care

Using the advice in this guide you can provide the care your child needs at home

Name of Child

Age Date/Time advice given

Further advice / Follow up

.....

Name of professional

Signature of professional

Asthma/Wheeze Management Plan

Regular treatment

Name of inhaler and strength	Dose	
Preventer (brown/orange/purple/red) puffs in the morning puffs at bedtime
Reliever (blue)		
Other asthma medications	Give puffs when coughing, wheezing or breathless and 10-15 minutes before exercise	

Remember to use the spacer!

Only 1 puff at a time

Your child's asthma is under control if

- They have very few or no asthma symptoms – wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath.
- They can do all their normal activities without symptoms.

Action

- Continue your child's regular asthma medicines.

What to do when my child is

- Coughing or wheezing more than usual.
- Waking up at night with asthma symptoms.
- Needing their blue inhaler more than usual.
- Has a cold.

Action

- Give 4 puffs of the blue inhaler every 4-6 hours.
- If your child is not better after 1 day see your GP or practice nurse.
- If your child remains unwell see next step.

What do I do when my child is

- Short of breath, wheezing or coughing constantly.
- Needing their blue inhaler every 3-4 hours.
- Unable to do their normal activities.

Action

- Give up to 6-10 puffs of blue inhaler every 4 hours.
- If your doctor has advised oral steroids give – Prednisolonemg (.....tablets) once a day each morning for 3-5 days as advised.
- Make an appointment for your child to see your GP or practice nurse today. If it's outside normal opening hours ring the GP emergency number for advice.

Following your child's medical review please give

Day 1

10 puffs of the blue reliever inhaler every 4 hours.

Prednisolone tabletsmg (.....tablets) in the morning.

If your child needs their inhaler more often get urgent medical advice.

Day 2

4-6 puffs of the blue reliever inhaler every 4-6 hours.

Prednisolone tablets: mg (.....tablets) in the morning.

Get medical advice if your child needs their inhaler more often than this.

Days 3-4

2-4 puffs of the blue inhaler as needed and follow the plan in this leaflet

Some Useful Phone Numbers

GP Surgery

(make a note of the number here)

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NHS 111 - Dial 111

(available 24hrs - 7 days a week)

GP Out of Hours Service

Appointments booked via NHS 111

Open from 6:30pm - 8:30am,
7 days a week

For online advice:

NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

(available 24hrs - 7 days a week)

Urgent Care Centre:

Warren Farm Urgent Care Centre

Warren Farm Road, Birmingham, West
Midlands, B44 0PU
8.00am-8.00pm

Erdington Health and Wellbeing Walk In Centre

196 High Street, 1st Floor, Erdington,
Birmingham, B23 6SJ
8.00am-8.00pm

Washwood Heath Urgent Care Centre

Clodeshall Road, Washwood Heath,
Birmingham, West Midlands, B8 3SN
9.00am-9.00pm

The Hill Urgent Care Centre

Sparkhill Primary Care Centre, 856
Stratford Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham,
B11 4BW
8.00am-8.00pm

South Birmingham GP Walk In Centre

0121 415 2095
15 Katie Road, Selly Oak,
Birmingham, B29 6JG.
8.00am-8.00pm

Birmingham NHS Walk In Centre

0121 255 4500
Lower Ground Floor, Boots The Chemists
Ltd, 66 High Street, Birmingham,
West Midlands, B4 7TA

Mon-Fri: 8.00am – 7.00pm
(last patient seen at 6:30pm)

Sat: 9.00am – 6.00pm
(last patient seen at 5:30pm)

Sun: 1.00am – 4.00pm
(last patient seen at 3:30pm)

Solihull UCC

Solihull Hospital, Lode Lane,
Solihull, B91 2JL
8.00am-8.00pm

Summerfield GP and Urgent Care Centre

Summerfield Primary Care Centre, 134
Heath Street, Winson Green, Birmingham,
B18 7AL.
8.00am-8.00pm

If you require an interpreter, inform the member of staff you are speaking with.

Data Protection

Looking after and sharing information about your child

We have a duty of care to help patients and families understand how information about them is kept and shared and we include the following information in all our patient leaflets:

Information is collected about your child relevant to their diagnosis, treatment and care. We store it in written records and electronically on computer. As a necessary part of that care and treatment we may have to share some of your information with other people and organisations who are either responsible or directly involved in your child's care. This may involve taking your child's information off site. We may also have to share some of your information for other purposes, such as research etc. Any information that is shared in this way will not identify your child unless we have your consent. If you have any questions and/or do not want us to share that information with others, please talk to the people looking after your child or contact PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on 0121 333 8403.

Birmingham Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Steelhouse Lane Birmingham B4 6NH

Telephone 0121 333 9999

Fax: 0121 333 9998

Website: www.bch.nhs.uk

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