

ASTHMA ATTACK



What is asthma?

Asthma is a disease of the airways, the small tubes which carry air in and out of the lungs.

When you have asthma symptoms the muscles in the airways tighten and the lining of the airways swells and produces sticky mucus. These changes cause the airways to become narrow, so that there is less space for the air to flow into and out of your lungs.

Signs & symptoms

- + Unable to get enough air
- + Progressively becoming anxious, short of breath, subdued or panicked
- + Focused only on breathing
- + Coughing or wheezing
- + Pale and sweating
- + Blue around lips, ear lobes and fingertips
- + Loss of consciousness or collapse

4:4:4

If someone is exhibiting difficulty breathing, but has not previously had an asthma attack, assist in giving four puffs of a blue reliever, followed by four breaths after each puff. Continue every four minutes if required, until an ambulance arrives.

Where permitted under local legislation/regulations and if necessary, use another person's reliever inhaler or use one from a first aid kit to assist a patient with a severe asthma attack.

Management

▼ UNCONSCIOUS PATIENT

Follow DRSABCD action plan

▼ CONSCIOUS PATIENT

1. Help the patient into a comfortable position

- + Usually sitting upright and leaning forward
- + Be reassuring and tell patient to take slow, deep breaths
- + Ensure adequate fresh air

2. Help with administration of patient's medication (4:4:4)

- + Give four puffs, one at a time, of a blue reliever inhaler (use spacer if available)
- + Patient takes four breaths after each puff
- + Wait four minutes
- + If no improvement, give another four puffs

3. If little or no improvement within minutes, keep giving:

- + Children – four puffs every four minutes
- + Adults – six to eight puffs every five minutes

4. If the patient still cannot breathe normally, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance

- + Inform the operator that someone is having an asthma attack
- + Continue administering medication (4:4:4) until the ambulance arrives

 **In an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance**

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