



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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