

# 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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