

My Asthma

ASTHMA
FOUNDATIONS
AUSTRALIA



So I have asthma ...

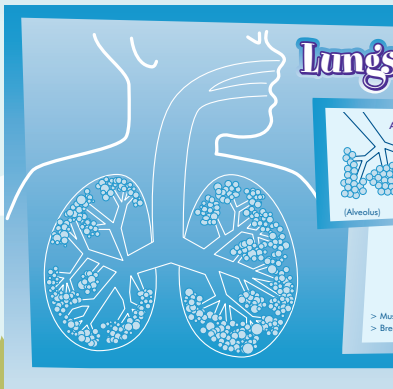
I've been told that I've got asthma; what is it?

Kids with asthma have twitchy breathing tubes in their lungs.

When I've got asthma, the muscles around my breathing tubes get tight and they can get swollen inside. Sometimes my breathing tubes get clogged up with sticky fluid called mucus.

What does it feel like?

- > I can't catch my breath. It is hard to breathe
- > My breathing may sound funny, a bit noisy (it's called wheezing). It could sound like a whistle when I breathe
- > It sometimes feels like someone is squeezing my chest really tightly
- > I may be coughing a lot – often at night time or after sport
- > I may feel itchy in my throat

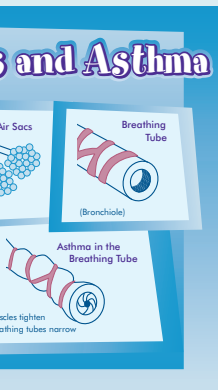


What makes my asthma worse?

There are some different things that can make my asthma worse. These are called triggers. Some things that can make my asthma worse are:

- > When I have a cold or the flu
- > When someone is smoking around me
- > Some animals
- > Some different plants, flowers and trees
- > Sometimes when the weather changes
- > Some strong smells
- > Some things that I eat
- > Sometimes when I play sport or run around a lot

These can be a bit different for each of us with asthma.



What if my asthma gets worse from exercise?

If my asthma gets worse when I play sport or run around I can stop it happening.

If I take my **blue puffer** before I do these things it stops my asthma getting worse.

My doctor helps me to know when to take my medication before I play sport or run around and includes the details in my Asthma Action Plan. My sports coach and teachers have a copy of my Asthma Action Plan too so they know what to do for my asthma.

If my asthma does get worse from exercise I follow Asthma First Aid

I don't avoid playing sport or running around because of my asthma.



what makes my asthma better?

My **blue puffer** (called a reliever) makes me feel better. It very quickly makes it easier for me to breathe. The medicine in my **blue puffer** helps the muscles around my breathing tubes relax.

I use my puffer with a spacer when I start to feel my asthma. A spacer is a plastic tube shaped a bit like a football. It helps to get more medicine into my lungs.



There are other medicines that I might have to take that help the swelling inside my breathing tubes. These are called preventers. They can be white, yellow, orange or brown puffers or a tablet. If I have a preventer I need to take it every day even when I feel like I don't have asthma. I need to wash my mouth out after I take my preventer.

There are also relievers that relax the muscles for a long time, for up to half a day. These are called symptom controllers.

I can't use my preventer or symptom controller for Asthma First Aid.



How do I look after my asthma?

So I can do all the things I want to do, I will need to have a plan – called a Written Asthma Action Plan that I get from my doctor. This plan tells me what medicines to take to keep me well and what to do when I feel my asthma.

My doctor says that I need to carry my **blue puffer** all the time in case my asthma gets worse.

I see my doctor when my asthma is worse and also a couple of times a year for a checkup to make sure I am still OK with my asthma.



What do I do if my friend needs help with their asthma?

Lots of my friends have asthma too. If they feel sick with their asthma I can help them.

The first thing to do is to get a grown up. If there is no grown up you can help with Asthma First Aid. Here's what you do:

Asthma First Aid

Step 1

Sit the person upright – be calm and do not leave them alone.



Step 2

Without delay give 4 separate puffs of a blue reliever puffer.

The medicine is best given one puff at a time with a spacer. Ask the person to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff.



Step 3

Wait 4 minutes. If there is little or no improvement repeat steps 2 & 3.



Step 4

If there is still no improvement call an ambulance immediately, **DIAL 000**. Repeat steps 2 & 3 over and over while waiting for the ambulance.



ASTHMA FOUNDATIONS

AUSTRALIA

National Office

Level 2, 491-495 King Street
WEST MELBOURNE VIC 3003
Ph: (03) 9696 7861 Fax: (03) 9696 7397
Email: national@asthmaaustralia.org.au
www.asthmaaustralia.org.au

Asthma Foundations Toll Free Number: 1800 645 130

ACT

PO Box 687
WODEN ACT 2606
Ph: (02) 6286 4414
Fax: (02) 6286 4475
Email:
execofficer@asthmaact.org.au
www.asthmaact.org.au

New South Wales

Level 7
35 Chandos Street
ST LEONARDS
NSW 2065
Ph: (02) 9906 3233
Fax: (02) 9906 4493
Email:
ask@asthmansw.org.au
www.asthmansw.org.au

Northern Territory

Unit 14
16 Charlton Court
WOOLNER NT 0820
Ph: (08) 8981 6066
Fax: (08) 8981 9066
Email:
asthmant@asthmant.org.au
www.asthmant.org.au

Queensland

51 Ballow Street
FORTITUDE VALLEY
QLD 4006
Ph: (07) 3252 7677
Fax: (07) 3257 1080
Email:
info@asthmaqld.org.au
www.asthmaqld.org.au

South Australia

300 South Rd
HILTON SA 5033
Ph: (08) 8238 9300
Fax: (08) 8238 9303
Email:
info@asthmasa.org.au
www.breathebetter.com.au

Tasmania

139 New Town Road
NEW TOWN TAS 7008
Ph: (03) 6228 5631
Fax: (03) 6228 9088
Email:
info@asthmatas.org.au
www.asthmatas.org.au

Victoria

491-495 King Street
WEST MELBOURNE
VIC 3003
Ph: (03) 9326 7088
Fax: (03) 9326 7055
Email:
advice@asthma.org.au
www.asthma.org.au

Western Australia

36 Ord Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005
Ph: (08) 9289 3600
Fax: (08)9289 3601
Email:
ask@asthmawa.org.au
www.asthmawa.org.au

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