

# First Aid for Asthma

## What is an asthma attack?

People with asthma have extra-sensitive airways. Triggers like dust, pollens, animals, tobacco smoke and exercise may make their airways swell and narrow, causing wheeze, cough and difficulty breathing.

1

Sit the person comfortably upright. Be calm and reassuring.

2

Give 4 puffs of a blue Reliever inhaler (puffer) – *Ventolin, Airomir, Bricanyl, or Asmol*.

Relievers are best given through a spacer, if available.

Use 1 puff at a time and ask the person to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff.

Use the person's own inhaler if possible. If not, use the First Aid kit inhaler or borrow one from someone else.

3

Wait 4 minutes. If there is no improvement, give another 4 puffs.

4

If little or no improvement, **CALL AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000)** and state that the person is having an asthma attack.

Keep giving 4 puffs every 4 minutes until the ambulance arrives.

**Children:** 4 puffs each time is a safe dose.

**Adults:** up to 6 - 8 puffs every 5 minutes may be given for a severe attack while waiting for the ambulance.

### With Spacer



- ▲ Shake inhaler and insert mouthpiece into spacer.
- ▲ Place spacer mouthpiece in person's mouth and fire 1 puff.
- ▲ Ask the person to breathe in and out normally for about 4 breaths.
- ▲ Repeat in quick succession until 4 puffs have been given.

### Without Spacer



- ▲ Shake inhaler.
- ▲ Place mouthpiece in the person's mouth. Fire 1 puff as the person inhales slowly and steadily.
- ▲ Ask the person to hold that breath for 4 seconds, then take 4 normal breaths.
- ▲ Repeat until 4 puffs have been given.

## What if it is the first attack of asthma?

- ▲ If someone collapses and appears to have difficulty breathing, **CALL AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY**, whether or not the person is known to have asthma.
- ▲ Give four puffs of a Reliever and repeat if no improvement.
- ▲ Keep giving 4 puffs every 4 minutes until the ambulance arrives.
- ▲ No harm is likely to result from giving a Reliever to someone who does not have asthma.
- ▲ *For more information on asthma, contact your local Asthma Foundation 1800 645 130*
- ▲ *For more copies of this chart, contact the National Asthma Council 1800 032 495*

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Leading the attack against Asthma