

FIRST AID FACT SHEET

Asthma Attack

An asthma attack is a sudden worsening of asthma symptoms triggered by the tightening of muscles around the airways.

Caused by

- + Exercise/activity.
- + Respiratory infections.
- + Inhaled allergens, such as pollen.
- + Changes in temperature and weather, especially cold air.
- + Environmental factors.
- + Emotional factors, such as anxiety, stress or laughter.
- + Certain medications e.g. aspirin.
- + Chemicals and strong smells.
- + Some foods and food preservatives.

Signs & symptoms

- + Increasing wheeze.
- + Persistent cough.
- + Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath.
- + Only able to speak in short sentences.
- + Chest tightness.

What to do

Unconscious casualty

1. Follow DRSABCD St John Action Plan.
2. If CPR is required it may be more difficult to get a breath into the casualty's lungs.

Conscious casualty

1. Follow DRSABCD St John Action Plan.
2. Sit the casualty comfortably upright. Be calm and reassuring and don't leave the casualty alone.
3. Help the casualty to take four (4) puffs from their inhaler following their Asthma Action Plan (if they have one).
4. Wait four (4) minutes – if the casualty still cannot breathe normally, give four (4) more puffs in the same way.
5. If the casualty gets little or no relief from the inhaler, call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.
6. Keep giving four (4) puffs every four (4) minutes until medical aid arrives.

How to give medication

With a spacer

- + Assemble spacer.
- + Remove puffer cap and **shake well**.
- + Insert puffer upright into spacer.
- + Place mouthpiece between teeth and seal lips around it.
- + Press once firmly on puffer to **fire one (1) puff** into spacer.
- + Take **four (4) breaths** in and out of spacer.
- + **Repeat one (1) puff at a time until four (4) puffs taken.** Remember to **shake the puffer before each puff.**

Without a spacer

- + Remove puffer cap and **shake well**.
- + Breathe out away from puffer.
- + Place mouthpiece between teeth and seal lips around it.
- + Press once firmly on puffer while breathing in slowly & deeply.
- + Slip puffer out of mouth.
- + **Hold breath for four (4) seconds** or as long as comfortable.
- + Breathe out slowly away from puffer.
- + **Repeat one (1) puff at a time until four (4) puffs taken.** Remember to **shake the puffer before each puff.**



In a medical emergency
call **Triple Zero (000)**

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Information provided is as per Australian Resuscitation Council Guidelines. These first aid protocols are for the Australian market only. All care has been taken in preparing this information but St John takes no responsibility for its use. This information is not a substitute for practical first aid training with St John.