

# First Aid for Asthma

# 1

**Sit the person comfortably upright.**

Be calm and reassuring.  
Don't leave the person alone.

# 2

**Give 4 puffs of a blue/grey reliever**

(e.g. Ventolin, Asmol or Airomir)

Use a spacer, if available.

Give 1 puff at a time with 4 breaths after each puff

Use the person's own inhaler if possible.

If not, use first aid kit inhaler or borrow one.

**OR**

**Give 2 separate doses of a Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler**

If a puffer is not available, you can use Symbicort (**people over 12**) or Bricanyl, even if the person does not normally use these.

# 3

**Wait 4 minutes.**

If the person still cannot breathe normally, **give 4 more puffs.**

**Wait 4 minutes.**

If the person still cannot breathe normally, **give 1 more dose.**

# 4

If the person still cannot breathe normally,

**CALL AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000)**

Say that someone is having an asthma attack.

**Keep giving reliever.**

Give 4 puffs every 4 minutes until the ambulance arrives.

Children: 4 puffs each time is a safe dose.

Adults: For a severe attack you can give up to 6–8 puffs every 4 minutes

If the person still cannot breathe normally,

**CALL AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000)** Say that someone is having an asthma attack.

**Keep giving reliever while waiting for the ambulance:**

For Bricanyl, give 1 dose every 4 minutes

For Symbicort, give 1 dose every 4 minutes (up to 3 more doses)

## HOW TO USE INHALER

### WITH 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 puff into spacer
- Take 4 breaths in and out of spacer
- Slip spacer out of mouth
- Repeat 1 puff at a time until 4 puffs taken – remember to shake the puffer before each puff
- Replace cap

### WITHOUT SPACER



- Remove 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 and deeply
- Slip puffer out of mouth
- Hold breath for 4 seconds or as long as comfortable
- Breathe out slowly away from puffer
- Repeat 1 puff at a time until 4 puffs taken – remember to shake the puffer before each puff
- Replace cap

### BRICANYL OR SYMBICORT



- Unscrew cover and remove
- Hold inhaler upright and twist grip around and then back
- Breathe out away from inhaler
- Place mouthpiece between teeth and seal lips around it
- Breathe in forcefully and deeply
- Slip inhaler out of mouth
- Breathe out slowly away from inhaler
- Repeat to take a second dose – remember to twist the grip both ways to reload before each dose
- Replace cover

### Not Sure if it's Asthma?

**CALL AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000)**

If a person stays conscious and their main problem seems to be breathing, follow the asthma first aid steps. Asthma reliever medicine is unlikely to harm them even if they do not have asthma.

### Severe Allergic Reactions

**CALL AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000)**

Follow the person's Action Plan for Anaphylaxis if available. If the person has known severe allergies and seems to be having a severe allergic reaction, use their adrenaline autoinjector (e.g. EpiPen, Anapen) before giving asthma reliever medicine.

For more information on asthma visit:

Asthma Foundations – [www.asthmaaustralia.org.au](http://www.asthmaaustralia.org.au)

National Asthma Council Australia – [www.nationalasthma.org.au](http://www.nationalasthma.org.au)

National Asthma  
Council Australia  
leading the attack against asthma

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