

Recognising worsening asthma

Using a Spacer

Child Asthma Plan Symptom Diary



1 Worse

- Occasional wheeze or cough at night
- Cough or wheeze when excited or playing needing reliever inhaler

I can say a whole sentence without taking a breath



2 Worried

- Breathing is faster than usual
- Wheezing
- Coughing
- Change in normal behaviour
- Requiring more reliever inhaler

I need to take a breath in... the middle of a sentence



3 Asthma Emergency

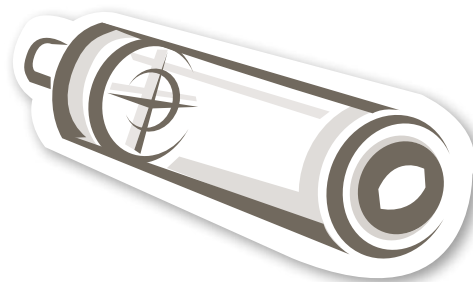
- Breathing is very difficult
- Too tired to cough
- Might not wheeze (chest may go silent)
- Obvious muscle use (neck and chest)
- Reliever not working

Help ... I'm ... struggling ... for ... breath ...



Spacers are needed to help get the medication into the lungs. Ask your doctor about them if you don't already have one.

- 1 Fit the mask (for under 2 year olds or if necessary).
- 2 Shake the inhaler well (holding it upright).
- 3 Fit the inhaler into the opening at the end of the spacer.
- 4 Seal lips firmly round the mouthpiece, or place the mask so it seals around the nose and mouth.
- 5 Press the inhaler **once only**.
- 6 Hold in place until 6 slow normal breaths have been taken (watch or listen for valve movement).
- 7 Repeat these steps (1-6) for further doses.
- 8 Wash the spacer once a week with warm water and dishwashing liquid. **Don't rinse. Drip dry.** This reduces the electrostatic charge so that the medicine does not stick to the spacer sides.



Your guide to scoring symptoms

Use the diary to keep a record of your child's symptoms. Symptoms can be things like a cough or a wheezing sound. Take the diary with you when you see your doctor, nurse or asthma educator. It will help them to know how your child has been and how to manage their asthma better.

Score in the first three columns:

- No symptoms will score **0**
- Mild symptoms will score..... **1**
- Moderate symptoms that distress the child will score **2**
- Severe and/or sudden onset of symptoms will score..... **3**

Getting these scores absolutely correct isn't essential – the day-to-day trends are often more important. Recording changes of reliever medication given can help to show if asthma is worsening.

The remaining columns on the diary allow you to fill in other details that will be helpful. Things that may have caused symptoms are important:

- triggers such as cigarette smoke, cats or cold air
- minor behaviour changes can be an early sign of illness.

Record your child's symptoms on the diary every day (put the chart on the fridge door to help you remember). You can use the key in the inside page as a guide. Match your scores to the colours on the Child Asthma Plan. This will help you to change your child's treatment as symptoms change, as shown on the Asthma Plan. Children with well-controlled asthma should have few or no symptoms. Turn over to fill in the diary.

Other important information for your symptom diary

Reliever doses	Record the number of times you give the child their medication each day
Preventer doses	
Other medicines given	Record any other medications you give the child e.g. antibiotics, paracetamol
Comments	Record events that may be important, such as triggers (cigarette smoke, animals etc.) or other health problems (e.g. tummy ache, unusual foods eaten)



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