

# Sport, medication and asthma

FACT SHEET prepared by the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation NZ

**Any sports person who uses any asthma medication needs to know the rules about its use when it comes to their sport. The rules for using asthma medication depend upon the competition level.**

## **What are the rules for asthma medications and competitive sport?**

International level athletes need permission for most asthma treatments before they use them, which may be granted by their International Federation, or by Drug Free Sport NZ, through a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE).

National level athletes need permission to take certain asthma treatments, except beta2agonists (relievers) and inhaled corticosteroids (preventers).

Athletes who compete at neither the international nor national level are still covered by anti-doping rules and may be tested. If they have taken a prohibited substance and an adverse finding occurs as a result, they may be asked to apply for a retrospective TUE (see below for an explanation of a TUE).

Refer to [drugfreesport.org.nz](http://drugfreesport.org.nz) for more details.

## **What is a Therapeutic Use Exemption?**

A TUE is a special application to use a prohibited substance for the treatment of any illness. Strict criteria must be met and in most cases it is necessary to provide a supportive letter from two doctors, one of whom must be a specialist in the relevant area.

A TUE form for national level athletes can be downloaded from [www.drugfreesport.org.nz](http://www.drugfreesport.org.nz) and should be completed by appropriate medical professionals and signed by the athlete. Most international level athletes are required to use the TUE forms available from their International Federation's website. Call 0800 DRUGFREE for help relating to international competition.

TUEs are granted for a specific medication, at a specific dosage and for a specific time period.

## **Asthma Medication**

Asthma is typically treated by inhaled drugs. Oral drugs are generally given only in the case of an acute attack. There are two main groups of medications –corticosteroids (inhaled, oral or systemic), which reduce inflammation in the airways and therefore prevent asthma symptoms, and beta2agonists, which relieve symptoms.

Level of competition	Beta <sub>2</sub> Agonist	Inhaled Corticosteroids	Oral steroids	Systemic Injection Steroids
<b>International</b>	TUE required	Declaration of Use required prior to and at time of doping control procedure	TUE required	TUE required
<b>National</b>	Retro-active TUE and medical file required if tested and adverse finding occurs	Declaration of Use required prior to or at time of doping control procedure	TUE required	TUE required
<b>Neither International nor National</b>	Retroactive TUE and medical file required if tested and adverse finding occurs	Declaration of Use required at time of doping control procedure.	Retroactive TUE and medical file required if tested and adverse finding occurs	Retroactive TUE and medical file required if tested and adverse finding occurs

Table: Asthma medication, different levels of competition and the permission required

**What if I am a national athlete and return an adverse finding?**

National athletes who are tested and return an adverse analytical finding for a beta2agonist must submit a file reflecting best medical practice including:

- A complete medical history.
- A comprehensive clinical examination report, with focus on the respiratory system.
- A spirometry report including Forced Expiratory Volume in 1 second (FEV1). For further information, see fact sheet “What is Spirometry” or visit [www.asthmafoundation.org.nz](http://www.asthmafoundation.org.nz).
- If airway obstruction is present, the spirometry will be repeated following the inhalation of a short acting beta2agonist (SABA) to demonstrate reversibility of the obstruction. Reversibility of over 12 percent confirms the diagnosis of asthma.
- If reversible airway obstruction is not demonstrated by spirometry a bronchial provocation test will be required to establish how sensitive the airways are.
- Name, specialisation, address, telephone and fax numbers, email of examining physician.

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Drug Free Sport New Zealand

Toll free 0800 378 437

[drugfreesport.org.nz](http://drugfreesport.org.nz)

**The Asthma and Respiratory Foundation NZ can help you**

The Asthma and Respiratory Foundation NZ is New Zealand's not-for-profit sector authority on asthma and other respiratory illnesses. We advocate to government and raise awareness of respiratory illnesses, fund research for better treatments and educate on best practice.

Check out our comprehensive website at [asthmaandrespiratory.org.nz](http://asthmaandrespiratory.org.nz)