

# Asthma

Following your visit to the **Brisbane Northside Emergency Centre**, the doctor is happy that you are well enough to go home. This fact sheet will provide you with additional information to assist you with your recovery.

## Triggers

- The triggers for asthma attacks vary from one person to another.
- Common irritants are infections, pollens, plants, cigarette smoke, dust mites. A healthy diet and active lifestyle help in keeping the symptoms under control.
- Overweight, stress, depression and smoking will have a negative impact on an asthmatic.
- Knowing your triggers will help you to live an active and healthy life.

## For more information

Please contact the *Asthma Foundation* on **1800 645 130** or visit [asthmafoundation.org.au](http://asthmafoundation.org.au)

*Please call us or return to our centre if you have any concerns. Alternatively, your general practitioner has received information regarding your visit to **BNE** and can address any concerns you may have.*

## What is Asthma?

Asthma is a disorder of the lungs and the airway that is caused by a chronic inflammation resulting in the narrowing of the airway. It's often hereditary and affects 10 per cent of Australians and almost 1 in 4 children.

The cause is unknown and there's no definitive cure. However, asthma is treatable and people with it can live a normal, active life.

During an asthma attack the airways swell up and build excess mucous. The muscles around the airways tighten. This causes wheezing, coughing, difficulty breathing and tightness of the chest. Triggers of asthma are different for each individual however common ones include smoke (cigarette and other), infections, allergies and exercise.

## Treatment

- **Relievers** relax the tight airway muscles and keep airways open for 4–6 hours. They work within 4 minutes and are to be taken when you have symptoms like breathlessness, wheezing, a tight chest and/or a persistent cough. Brand names include Ventolin, Airomir, Asmol, and Bricanyl.
- **Preventers** are to be taken every day, as prescribed, to reduce the risk of having symptoms or flare-ups. They start to work within a day, but can take up to a week to have full effect. Brand names include Alvesco, Flixotide Pulmicort and Qvar.

- **Combination** medications have a preventer and a LABA (relaxes tight airway muscles). They are prescribed for people who have asthma symptoms even with regular preventer use. Brand names include Seretide, Symbicort, Flutiform and Breo.
- **Other medications** Prednisone/ Prednisolone is a short course of medication for severe asthma flare-ups. Serevent/Oxis/Foradile is only to be used in combination with an inhaled corticosteroid preventer medication.

## Asthma management at home

An indication of good asthma control is:

- Participation in activities, including exercise, without symptoms
- Sleeping through the night without symptoms
- Requiring none or very little relievers
- Maintaining your best lung function.

## How to use an asthma puffer

1. Remove cap from puffer. Hold up right and shake well. Breathe out away from the puffer.
2. Tilt the chin upward to open your airways. Put the puffer mouthpiece in your mouth and create a seal with your lips. Start to breathe in through your mouth, then fire one puff of medication and continue to breathe in steadily and deeply.
3. Remove puffer from mouth, close your mouth and hold the breath for about 5 seconds, or as long as is comfortable. Breathe out gently way from the mouthpiece.

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**627 Rode Road Chermside**

*Located between The Prince Charles and Holy Spirit Northside Private Hospitals.*

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