

Children with Asthma

Asthma is very common among children. Approximately 11% of Australian children are currently diagnosed with asthma. A written Asthma Action Plan is an important tool to help manage asthma, for children, parents, school staff and anyone caring for your child.

Key messages for parents

As part of good asthma management, parents should make sure that their child has a written Asthma Action Plan.

An Asthma Action Plan is a written set of instructions prepared in partnership with your doctor and will help to:

- Care for day-to-day asthma.
- Recognise worsening asthma and the steps to manage it.
- Carry out first aid in an emergency.

Key messages for school staff

The information in an Asthma Action Plan is essential for school staff so they can better manage your child while in their care.

Your child should be reviewed regularly by the family doctor (and again if there are changes in their asthma) and the Asthma Action Plan updated accordingly.

School Asthma Action Plans can be obtained from The Asthma Foundation of Victoria

T 1800 645 130

or downloaded from The Asthma Foundation of Victoria

W www.asthma.org.au.

The Asthma Foundation of Victoria also provides schools with information, education and resources that support the school community to become Asthma Friendly®.

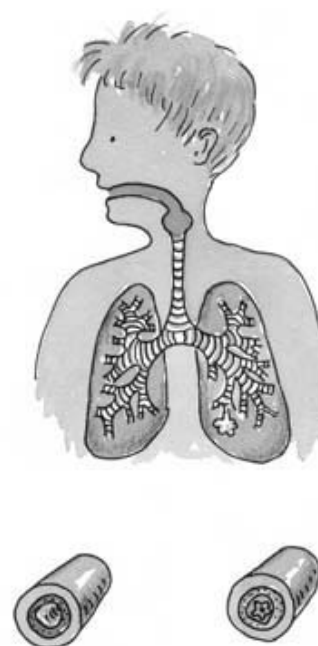
The Asthma Friendly® Schools Program aims to improve the wellbeing of young Australians with asthma and enable them to participate fully in daily activities, including regular exercise and sport.

Research has shown that school staff involved in the Asthma Friendly® Schools Program are more confident when dealing with children's asthma.

Your child's school can access guidelines to assist with developing a health support plan via the *Victorian Government School Reference Guide*

W www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/schadmin/environment/4-5.pdf

The health support plan should be made available to relevant staff (including casual replacement teachers and other staff who have occasional care of your child). The health support plan should be reviewed annually or whenever there is any significant change to your child's condition or treatment.



Key messages for children

Children should also be encouraged to take an active part in their own asthma care as soon as they are old enough to take their own medication.

An asthma attack can occur anywhere, at any time and educating children can assist in providing skills that could save a life.

Exercise is a very common trigger for asthma. However, as exercise is vital for health and development, it is one that children should not avoid.

Children with asthma should be encouraged to be active. Don't let asthma stop your child from being active. Take the time to learn how to manage asthma in order to have a healthy, active lifestyle. See your doctor for advice.

First aid for asthma

If someone is having an asthma attack and they do not have their own Asthma Action Plan (or their plan is not readily available) you should follow the 4-Step Asthma First Aid Plan as outlined opposite:

4-Step Asthma First Aid Plan

Step 1: Sit the person upright and give reassurance. Do not leave the person alone.

Step 2: Without delay give four separate puffs of a blue reliever medication (Airomir, Asmol, Epaq or Ventolin). The medication is best given one puff at a time via a spacer. Ask the person to take four breaths from the spacer after each puff of medication. If a spacer is not available, just use the puffer on its own.

Step 3: Wait 4 minutes. If there is little or no improvement, repeat steps 2 and 3.

Step 4: If there is still little or no improvement call an ambulance (Dial 000).

(Call an ambulance at any time during this 4-Step Asthma First Aid Plan if the person's condition suddenly deteriorates or you are concerned about their condition).

Continuously repeat steps 2 and 3 while waiting for the ambulance.

For further information contact: The Asthma Foundation of Victoria

T (03) 9326 7088

F 1800 645 130

E advice@asthma.org.au

W www.asthma.org.au

Our thanks to the Asthma Foundation of Victoria for contributing this section.

