

Remember, Avoiding or reducing exposure to triggers is essential for good asthma control



Salbutamol First Aid



1.
Sit the person upright. Be calm and reassuring.
Do not leave them alone.

2.
Give 6 puffs of reliever medication. 1 puff at a time to 6 breaths. Shake inhaler between each puff.

3.
Wait 6 minutes.

4.
Repeat steps 1-3

5.
If there is no improvement after the 2nd lot of reliever, dial 111 for an ambulance and keep giving 6 puffs every 6 minutes until help arrives.

Symbicort First Aid



1.
Sit the person upright. Be calm and reassuring.
Do not leave them alone.

2.
Give 1 actuation (puff) at a time, 1-2 minutes apart.

3.
If there is no improvement after 4 actuations (<12yrs) or 6 actuations (>12yrs), dial 111 for an ambulance

4.
Keep using your symbicort inhaler as often as you need until help arrives.

5.
Even if you seem to get better, seek medical help right away.

asthma
NEW ZEALAND

Breathe
Easy
5 YEARS



ASTHMA TRIGGERS

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Asthma triggers

An asthma trigger is something that can be allergic (like dust) or non-allergic (like exercise) that brings on asthma symptoms. Understanding what your asthma triggers are and how to avoid them (where possible) is an important part of good asthma management.

Identifying triggers

- Skin prick test
- Radioallergosorbent test (RAST)
- Keeping a symptom diary

Triggers and the lungs

The airways in a person who has asthma are over-sensitive and irritated easily by triggers (you may have one or many).

- Respiratory illness
- Exercise
- Pets – cats and dogs
- Cigarette smoking or vaping (including second hand)
- Some medications such as ibuprofen
- Weather changes
- Dust mites
- Pollens
- Stress and anxiety
- Perfumes/deodorants/cleaning products
- Mould

The irritation from these triggers causes an immune response inside the airways and causes them to become inflamed (swelling), produce excess mucous and cause muscle tightening around the airways. This airway tightening is called bronchoconstriction. These processes lead to narrowing of the inside of the airway which can cause any or all of the following symptoms. Asthma symptoms can come and go and sometimes it is unclear what has caused them.

Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing

Breathing can be fast and shallow and it will feel like there is not enough air getting to the lungs

Cough

Can be 'dry' (due to twitching muscles on the outside of the airways) or 'wet' (due to excess mucous production inside the airways). Cough can occur at any time but is common at night and after exercise

Wheeze

A high-pitched whistling noise, usually heard when breathing out

Tight chest

The chest feels tight and is unable to expand fully when breathing. Some children describe this as a 'sore' tummy

Allergic triggers



Dust mites

Dust mites are a very common trigger that live in carpet, bedding and soft toys.

Hint: Use hot water when washing linen.



Pets

Pet fur, skin dander, saliva, urine are known to trigger asthma, e.g. cats and dogs.

Hint: Keep the pets out of bedrooms.



Pollen

Pollen is an airborne powder substance produced by plants (grass, trees, weeds). The levels are usually high during the warmer months of the year.

Hint: Close windows on windy days.



Mould

Mould is produced by fungi, which grows in damp and dark environments, e.g. bathrooms, kitchen.

Hint: Use extractor fans in bathroom and kitchen or open windows.



Medications

Medications such as beta blockers (heart medication) and anti-inflammatory medications (i.e. Ibuprofen) can trigger asthma in some people.

Hint: Discuss with your health care provider.

Non-allergic triggers



Respiratory illness

Asthma can worsen when sick with colds or flu

Hint: Wash hands after using tissues, have a flu vaccine yearly.



Smoke/fumes

Include cigarette smoke, vape emissions, car exhaust fumes, perfumes, aerosol cleaning products, insect sprays.

Hint: Quit smoking - get help today.



Exercise

Uncontrolled asthma and cold air can trigger exercise-induced asthma.

Hint: Use preventer everyday even when well.



Emotions

Laughing, crying, stress or anxiety can trigger asthma symptoms in some people.

Hint: Use preventer everyday even when well.



Home environment

A cold and damp home can trigger asthma.

Hint: Talk to your healthcare provider about a healthy homes referral.