First Aid for Asthma

1. Sit the person comfortably upright.
   Be calm and reassuring.
   Don’t leave the person alone.

2. Give 4 puffs of a blue/grey reliever
   (e.g. Ventolin, Asmol or Airomir)
   Use a spacer, if available.
   Give 1 puff at a time with 4 breaths after each puff
   Use the person’s own inhaler if possible.
   If not, use first aid kit inhaler or borrow one.

3. Wait 4 minutes.
   If the person still cannot breathe normally, give 4 more puffs.

4. If the person still cannot breathe normally,
   CALL AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000)
   Say that someone is having an asthma attack.
   Keep giving reliever.
   Give 4 puffs every 4 minutes until the ambulance arrives.
   Children: 4 puffs each time is a safe dose.
   Adults: For a severe attack you can give up to 6–8 puffs every 4 minutes

WITH SPACER

• Assemble spacer
• Remove puffer cap and shake well
• Insert puffer upright into spacer
• Place mouthpiece between teeth and seal lips around it
• Press once firmly on puffer to fire one puff into spacer
• Take 4 breaths in and out of spacer
• Slip spacer out of mouth
• Repeat 1 puff at a time until 4 puffs taken – remember to shake the puffer before each puff
• Replace cap

WITHOUT SPACER

• Remove cap and shake well
• Breathe out away from puffer
• Place mouthpiece between teeth and seal lips around it
• Press once firmly on puffer while breathing in slowly and deeply
• Slip puffer out of mouth
• Hold breath for 4 seconds or as long as comfortable
• Breathe out slowly away from puffer
• Repeat 1 puff at a time until 4 puffs taken – remember to shake the puffer before each puff
• Replace cap

BRICANYL OR SYMBICORT

• Unscrew cover and remove
• Hold inhaler upright and twist grip around and then back
• Breathe out away from inhaler
• Place mouthpiece between teeth and seal lips around it
• Breathe in forcefully and deeply
• Slip inhaler out of mouth
• Hold breath for 4 seconds or as long as comfortable
• Breathe out slowly away from inhaler
• Repeat to take a second dose – remember to twist the grip both ways to reload before each dose
• Replace cover

Not Sure if it’s Asthma?

CALL AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000)

If a person stays conscious and their main problem seems to be breathing, follow the asthma first aid steps. Asthma reliever medicine is unlikely to harm them even if they do not have asthma.

Severe Allergic Reactions

CALL AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000)

Follow the person’s Action Plan for Anaphylaxis if available. If the person has known severe allergies and seems to be having a severe allergic reaction, use their adrenaline autoinjector (e.g. EpiPen, Anapen) before giving asthma reliever medicine.

For more information on asthma visit:
Asthma Foundations – www.asthmaaustralia.org.au
National Asthma Council Australia – www.nationalasthma.org.au

Although all care has been taken, this chart is a general guide only which is not intended to be a substitute for individual medical advice/treatment. The National Asthma Council Australia expressly disclaims all responsibility (including for negligence) for any loss, damage or personal injury resulting from reliance on the information contained. © National Asthma Council Australia 2011.