



**FIGHTING
CORONAVIRUS
WITH EVERY
BREATH**



**ASTHMA AWARENESS
WEEK 2020**
#AsthmaEducation

ASTHMA LESSON PLAN 2020



WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma is a common condition which causes inflammation of the airways. The airways are the small tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs.

Asthma causes the airways to become over-sensitive and react to things that wouldn't normally cause a problem, such as cold air or dust.

When the airways react to a substance, the muscles of the tube walls tighten up, making them narrow and leaving little room for air to flow in and out. The lining of the airways then gets swollen (just like your nose during a cold) and sticky mucus is produced which clogs up the breathing passages.

With so little space in the airways, it becomes difficult for air to move in and out and the chest has to work much harder to breathe. Tightening of the muscles around the airways can happen quickly; this is the most common cause of mild asthma symptoms.

ASTHMA FACTS

1 in 5

Proportion of children who experience asthma at some stage in their life.

1 in 13

Proportion of people in Ireland currently have asthma.

8,000

The number of asthma admissions to hospital every year.

€472 million

The amount asthma costs the state per annum.

one every six days

The frequency at which people are dying as a result of their asthma.



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ASTHMA SYMPTOMS CAN INCLUDE:

- Cough - won't go away, occurs at night/ during exercise
- Wheeze (a whistling sound that occurs when breathing out).
- Chest tightness (tummy ache in younger children)
- Shortness of breath

WHAT CAUSES ASTHMA?

We still don't know the exact cause of asthma, but we do know that:

- Genetic
- Onset- usually in childhood
- Allergies/allergic diseases- link
- Modern lifestyles
- Risk is increased by:
- Smoking during pregnancy
- Obesity/overweight
- Viral respiratory infections
- Poss. loss of symptoms but it never goes away
- Not infectious

HOW IS ASTHMA DIAGNOSED?

There is no single test to diagnose asthma. A GP will diagnose asthma based on:

- Family history
- Pattern of symptoms
- Chest examination
- Peak flow/ lung function test (age dependant)
- Trial of asthma treatment

ASTHMA TRIGGERS

- Air Pollution
- Cigarette smoke
- House dust mite
- Medication
- Occupations
- Pets
- Pollen
- Spores
- Weather changes
- Colds and flu
- Emotions
- Exercise
- Food and drink
- Hormones



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IS THERE A CURE?

Asthma **cannot be cured** but it can be controlled through management of triggers and proper use of medication. Most young people with asthma should be able to live healthy, active lives with minimal symptoms.

ASTHMA MEDICATION

Thankfully, symptoms can be relieved quickly with a reliever inhaler (usually blue). However, the swelling and mucus happen more slowly and need a different treatment. This usually is usually a preventer inhaler which is taken daily to allow the effect to build up over time.

The majority of people with asthma are prescribed a daily preventer inhaler to protect against an asthma attack and a reliever inhaler to use when symptoms occur. It is extremely important that preventer medication is taken regularly, as prescribed and even when asthma symptoms are not present.

Controller:

- Controls swelling & inflammation in airways.
- Effect builds up over period of time.
- Typically required to be taken daily, usually morning and evening- even when feeling well.

Reliever:

- Can take immediately when asthma symptoms appear.
- Reliever medication relaxes muscles surrounding narrowed airways.
- Airways open wider making it easier to breathe.

Using a Spacer makes taking inhalers easier and more effective.

Spacer devices:

- Volumatic
- Aerochamber
- Babyhaler

Other Medication:

- Combination inhalers
- Oral steroid tablets
- Medications:
- Always give medications as prescribed
- If child using a reliever more than twice a week- see a GP
- Access to blue reliever at all times is important
- Children should have their inhaler technique checked at every visit

Asthma Control

- Avoid triggers
- Ensure correct inhaler technique
- Take medication as prescribed
- Never ignore asthma symptoms
- Complete an Asthma Action Plan with your doctor



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SIGNS OF AN ASTHMA ATTACK

If someone is having an asthma attack they will have one, or a combination of, any of the following symptoms:

- Cough
- Wheeze
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness
- Too breathless to finish a sentence
- Too breathless to walk, sleep or eat
- Lips turning blue

SYMPTOMS OF AN ASTHMA ATTACK

COUGH | **WHEEZE**

DIFFICULTY FINISHING SENTENCES | **SHORTNESS OF BREATH**

CHEST TIGHTNESS

LIPS TURNING BLUE

OR ANY COMBINATION OF THESE.

ASTHMA SOCIETY OF IRELAND

5 STEP RULE

HOW TO DEAL WITH AN ASTHMA ATTACK

- 1** SIT UP AND STAY CALM DO NOT LIE DOWN
- 2** TAKE SLOW STEADY BREATHS
- 3** TAKE 1 PUFF OF RELIEVER INHALER USUALLY BLUE EVERY MINUTE
PEOPLE AGED 6+
- UP TO 10 PUFFS IN 10 MINS
CHILDREN UNDER 6
- UP TO 6 PUFFS IN 10 MINS
- 4** 999/112
- 5** 10 MINUTES

REPEAT **STEP 3** IF AN AMBULANCE HAS NOT ARRIVED IN 10 MINUTES

CALL **112** OR **999** IF YOUR SYMPTOMS DO NOT IMPROVE AFTER 10 MINUTES OR IF YOU'RE WORRIED AT ANY STAGE

IF SOMEONE HAS AN ASTHMA ATTACK:

- Do not leave them on their own.
- Use a spacer if available.
- Make sure they see a healthcare professional afterwards.

CALL OUR ASTHMA ADVICELINE ON **1800 44 54 64** TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH AN ASTHMA NURSE.

THIS IS AN EMERGENCY ACT NOW

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