

Asthma first aid

The 4 x 4 x 4 plan. Stick this on the fridge — you do not need a diagnosis to give asthma first aid.



Signs to look for

Breathing

Fast, tight or working hard to breathe

Sound

Wheeze, or a cough that will not settle

Speech

Only short phrases or single words

Effort

Sucking in at the ribs or neck, pale, quiet

Follow the four steps

1

Sit them upright and stay calm

Sitting up makes breathing easier. Do not lie them down. Keep your voice slow and steady — they will take their cue from you. Send someone for the reliever puffer and stay with the child.

2

Give 4 puffs of blue reliever

Use a spacer if you have one. Shake the puffer, give **one puff** into the spacer, then have the child take **4 breaths** from it. Repeat until all 4 puffs are given — one puff, four breaths, four times.

3

Wait 4 minutes

Keep them sitting upright and watch their breathing. If there is no improvement after 4 minutes, give another 4 puffs the same way.

4

Still no improvement? Call 000

Ask for an ambulance and say the child is having an asthma emergency. Keep giving 4 puffs every 4 minutes until help arrives — you cannot overdose a child on blue reliever in first aid.

Call 000 straight away — do not wait the 4 minutes — if

The child cannot speak or is gasping for air
They become drowsy, floppy or hard to rouse
Their symptoms get worse very quickly

Their lips or face look blue or grey
There is no reliever puffer available
You are worried — trust that instinct