

## Symptoms of An Asthma Attack

- Not all symptoms listed have to be present for this to be an asthma attack
- Symptoms can get worse very quickly
- If in doubt, give emergency treatment
- Side effects from salbutamol tend to be mild and temporary. These side effects include feeling shaky or stating that the heart is beating faster

### Cough

A dry persistent cough may be a sign of an asthma attack.

### Chest tightness or pain

This may be described by a child in many ways including a 'tight chest', 'chest pain', tummy ache.

### Shortness of breath

A child may say that it feels like it's difficult to breathe, or that their breath has 'gone away'.

### Wheeze

A wheeze sounds like a whistling noise, usually heard when a child is breathing out. A child having an asthma attack may or may not be wheezing.

### Increased effort of breathing

This can be seen when there is sucking in between ribs or under ribs or at the base of the throat. The chest may be rising and falling fast and in younger children, the stomach may be obviously moving in and out. Nasal flaring.

### Difficulty in speaking

The child may not be able to speak in full sentences.

### Struggling to breathe

The child may be gasping for air or exhausted from the effort of breathing.

### **CALL AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY, WHILST GIVING EMERGENCY TREATMENT IF THE CHILD:**

- Appears exhausted
- Has blue/white tinge around the lips
- Is going blue
- Has collapsed



## Administering reliever inhaled therapy through a spacer

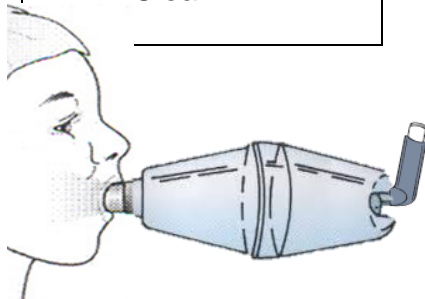
**Asthma+ Lung UK a video on how to use a spacer:**

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhaler-videos/tidal-breathing/>

A metered dose inhaler can be used through a spacer device. **If the inhaler has not been used for 2 weeks then press the inhaler twice into the air to clear it.**

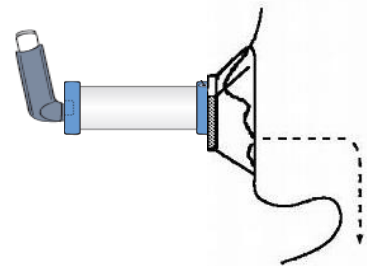
A Spacer might be

- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green
- Clear



A spacer may have

- A mask
- A mouthpiece



1. Keep calm and reassure the child
2. Encourage the child to sit up
3. Remove cap from inhaler
4. Shake inhaler and place it in the back of the spacer
5. Place mouthpiece in mouth with a good seal, (or if using the mask place securely over the mouth and nose)
6. Encourage the child to breathe in and out slowly and gently
7. Depress the cannister encouraging the child to continue to breathe in and out for 5 breaths
8. Remove the spacer
9. Wait a few seconds and repeat steps 2-6
10. Assess for improvement in symptoms

Dependent on response steps 2-7 can be repeated by 2 puffs (administer 1 at a time as above) every 2 minutes according to response up to 10 puffs

If there is no improvement **CALL 999**. If help does not arrive in 10 minutes give another 10 puffs in the same way

If the child does not feel better or you are worried **ANYTIME** before you have reached 10 puffs, **call 999 for an ambulance and continue to treat as above.**