

Where to find more useful information

Follow our Paediatric Asthma twitter feed @CYPAsthmaBH for more education and advice

Complete the **Asthma Control Test** online at www.myasthmaproject.co.uk/ to find out how well controlled your asthma is.

Get lots of information about asthma through the online **Healthy London Partnership's Asthma Toolkit** www.healthylondon.org/resource/london-asthma-toolkit/

Contact the **Asthma UK helpline** on **0300 222 5800** or visit their website at www.asthma.org.uk

Use the **Met Office Pollen** website for their pollen count forecasts and www.londonair.org.uk for current **air pollution** levels

Find resources and books for younger children at www.monkeywellbeing.com/

Get support to stop smoking at www.quitnow.smokefree.nhs.uk/

Find out information about **eczema** at www.eczema.org/

Learn about **anaphylaxis** and **allergy management** at www.allergyuk.org and www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/

If you need further advice, please contact

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by calling

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Barts and The London NHS Trust
<https://children.bartshealth.nhs.uk/>



Barts Health
NHS Trust

Patient information leaflet

For children & young people with viral-induced wheeze or asthma

Name:

Date of birth:

Hospital consultant:

Best peak flow:

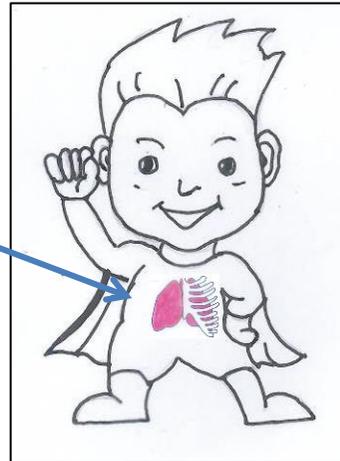
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Date:



Viral-induced wheeze

Wheeze is the high-pitched, whistling sound made when the **small airways (breathing tubes)** in your lungs become inflamed and swollen. **Your lungs** are the balloon-like structures that sit underneath your ribs and move air in and out.



Viral wheeze is a common condition where infants and toddlers become wheezy when they have a cough or a cold. The wheezing makes it difficult to breathe which can be **serious or life-threatening** if not treated properly.

Most children who wheeze with colds (viral wheeze) will grow out of the condition before starting school. It does not necessarily mean they will go on to develop asthma. However, if your child is often wheezy and/or coughs at night or with exercise, please speak to your GP for further advice.

What is the treatment for viral wheeze?

Unfortunately, there is no treatment to get rid of the viral illness. Antibiotics do not help. There are medications to treat the wheeze and difficulty in breathing.

Salbutamol (Ventolin) inhaler - also known as a RELIEVER

This **BLUE-COLOURED** inhaler can open the airways when you are unwell and make it easier to breathe.



If your child is having lots of episodes of viral wheeze, your Doctor might start an extra medication or a regular **preventer** inhaler to be taken **every day** to stop them becoming wheezy with coughs and colds.

Salbutamol weaning plan

You will be wheezy for a few days after discharge from the hospital. Whilst you are getting better you need to follow the **salbutamol weaning plan**. Your Doctor or Nurse will explain this to you before you go home.

Day after discharge	Number of puffs	How often to give
1	10 puffs	Every 4 hours
2	10 puffs	Every 6 hours
3	10 puffs	Every 8 hours
4	2-10 puffs	Every 4-8 hours as required
5	Stop if no wheeze	

Once you have completed your weaning plan, you must keep your salbutamol inhaler and spacer with you all the time in case of an emergency.

Prednisolone (emergency steroid medication)

You may have been prescribed Prednisolone during this admission, if so:

Give steroid tablets for days, after breakfast.

Why do I need to see my GP in 48 hours' time if I've been to hospital?

This appointment is **very important** as some people become unwell again after being discharged from A&E or the ward and might need to be re-admitted. Seeing your GP soon after being discharged could prevent this from happening.

You need to ask for an **emergency appointment** when you speak to the GP receptionist and explain you have just been discharged from hospital.

When should I come to hospital?

If you or your parents are worried about your symptoms, you should go to hospital urgently. Especially if:

- **You are needing 10 puffs of your salbutamol inhaler more often than every 4 hours**
- **Your salbutamol inhaler is not getting rid of the wheeze or difficulty in breathing**
- **Your symptoms are getting worse**
- **You are becoming unwell for any reason**

Steps before discharge

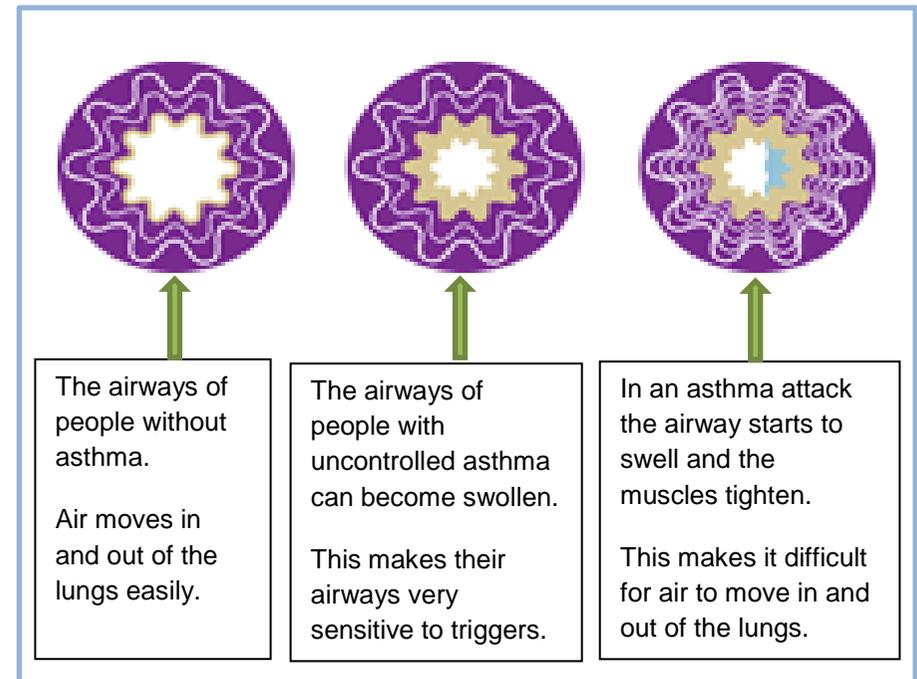
If you've been to A&E or admitted to hospital, normally you will be able to go home when you are remaining well on 10 puffs of a salbutamol inhaler every 4 hours. There are some important steps to be completed before you can be discharged home.

1. The **inhalers & medications will be explained** to you, including checking your **inhaler technique**.
2. You will be given a **wheeze or asthma management plan**. *This explains when to take your medication and what to do when your asthma gets worse.*
3. Your **salbutamol weaning plan** will be explained, *see next page for more information.*
4. You will be asked to make an **appointment to see your GP** for a review in **2 days' time**.

Asthma

Asthma is a long-term condition where the small airways in your lungs become **inflamed, swollen and narrow** when they meet a trigger. An asthma **trigger** is anything that makes your asthma worse by irritating your **sensitive airways**, such as colds, exercise or allergies.

Asthma symptoms include **coughing, wheezing and difficulty in breathing**. Asthma tends to be diagnosed in **school-aged children**. It is a common condition affecting **1 in 11 children**.



Asthma can make you feel unwell. It can also be very **serious and even life-threatening** if it is not controlled well. This is why it is important to take your medication.

Children and young people with asthma are also more likely to have **eczema, hayfever and/or allergies**. It is important to speak to your GP and learn how to manage these conditions as well.

How do you treat asthma?

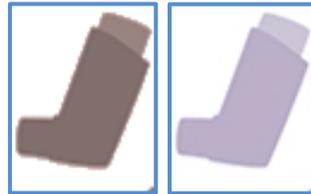
Reliever inhaler

Like the treatment for viral wheeze, this **BLUE-COLOURED** inhaler contains the medication **Salbutamol (Ventolin)** which opens up the airways in an **emergency**. The medication starts to work within a **few minutes**. Your personalised asthma management plan will explain how to use this inhaler when you are unwell.



Preventer inhaler

If your asthma is not controlled, your Doctor may start an extra medication called a **PREVENTER inhaler**. These are normally coloured **BROWN** or **PURPLE**.



Preventer inhalers contain a small amount of steroid medication which helps to stop your airways becoming swollen and **prevents** your asthma symptoms. This inhaler **should be taken every day** as prescribed even if you feel well and should only be stopped by your Doctor or Nurse

Tips for remembering to take your preventer inhaler every day

- Ask your parent/carer to remind you
- Set a reminder on your phone
- Make it a part of your daily routine by leaving it next to your toothbrush or on the meal table
- Keep a chart and tick off each dose

It is important to remember the difference between your reliever and preventer inhalers and to always use them with your spacer.

Prednisolone

Prednisolone is a steroid tablet which works in an **emergency** to help reduce swelling in your airways. It is usually taken for 3-5 days after an asthma attack. If you need this medication more than twice a year your asthma is not controlled, and you should see your Doctor.

How do I keep myself well?

There are several things you can do to keep yourself well and avoid having to come to hospital. These can apply to both asthma and viral wheeze.

1. If you are needing 10 puffs of salbutamol every 4 hours at home, you **must see your GP the same day** for a review. You might need a prescription for Prednisolone (steroid tablets).
2. Take your **inhalers and medications as advised**. Make sure you've always got access to your reliever (blue) inhaler.
3. Follow your **asthma or wheeze management plan**, see examples below. *If you have a smartphone you could take a picture for easy access.*
4. Go to your **annual asthma review appointment** at the GP surgery.
5. Stay in a **smoke-free environment**. Even if people smoke outside the house, they will still have particles on their clothes.
6. Make sure the **nursery/school and any sports teams / after school clubs** know about your condition, ensure that they have an up-to-date copy of your **asthma or wheeze care plan** and a **spare inhaler and spacer** for emergencies.
7. Understand how to avoid and manage your **triggers** (see previous page).



What are my triggers?

If you have asthma, you're more likely to react to triggers because your airways are sensitive. People are triggered by different things, managing these can improve your asthma.

Tick all the triggers that make you feel unwell. Speak to your Doctor or Nurse for advice about how to avoid or manage these.

		
Fur & Feathers	Cold Weather	Smoking
		
Exercise	Mould & Damp	Pollution
		
Food	Coughs & Colds	Stress & Emotions
		
House dust mites	Pollen	Thunderstorms

How do I know if my asthma is not controlled?

If your asthma is not controlled you're at a higher risk of having an asthma attack.

If your symptoms are getting worse or you have any signs of uncontrolled asthma you must see your GP **urgently** for a review, these could include:

- Needing your **Salbutamol (BLUE) inhaler** more than 3 times a week
- Having to take days off school for your asthma or having difficulty taking part in PE/sports
- Waking up at night coughing or wheezing
- Needing to go to A&E twice or more in a year
- Being admitted to hospital
- Requiring 2 or more courses of Prednisolone (steroid medication) in a year
- An Asthma Control Test (ACT) score less than 19

You can complete the **Asthma Control Test** online at

<https://www.myasthmaproject.co.uk/barts-health-asthma-control-test/>

This quick test will tell you how well controlled your asthma is. You might find it helpful to repeat this test every month to monitor your asthma symptoms.

How do I use a spacer?

A spacer is a clear plastic tube that attaches to your inhaler and helps increase the amount of medication that gets into your lungs and reduces the possibility of side effects. **You must always use a spacer when taking your inhaler.** There are different types of spacers that can be prescribed.

A **face-mask** should be used with the spacer in children under the age of five years old or those who might find it difficult to use a spacer (such as children with special needs).

Follow the steps below to use your spacer:

1. Shake the inhaler and attach it to the end of the spacer.
2. Place the spacer mouth-piece into your mouth (or face-mask over nose and mouth).
3. Tilt the spacer upwards in children under five years old.
4. Press the inhaler once and take 10 normal breaths. Count the breaths out for younger children.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 for each puff prescribed.



How do I clean my spacer?

Clean your spacer once a month to help you get the full benefits of your medication.

Follow the steps below:

1. Take your spacer apart.



2. Wash in warm soapy water and leave to soak for 15 minutes (without scrubbing or wiping).



3. Rinse the spacer and/or face-mask with clean water.



4. Leave to drip dry on a clean surface. Never use a cloth.



5. Put the spacer back together and it's ready to use.

