

What is an asthma attack?

An asthma attack occurs when the muscles surrounding the airways tighten and your airways become too narrow for you to breathe effectively.

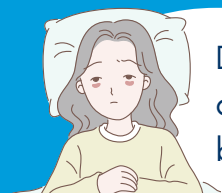
An attack can happen suddenly if your asthma is not under control and you are exposed to one of your triggers. Or, it can build up slowly over hours, days or even weeks.

SYMPTOMS OF AN ASTHMA ATTACK

The most common symptoms of an asthma attack include:

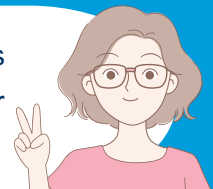
MILD TO SEVERE SYMPTOMS

Early warning signs of an asthma attack



Disrupted sleep due to asthma symptoms & breathing difficulty

Daytime symptoms
2 or more times per week



Inability to exercise normally without breathing issues

Decreased activity due to asthma



Getting a cold/flu

LIFE-THREATENING SYMPTOMS

Time to get help, an asthma attack is occurring



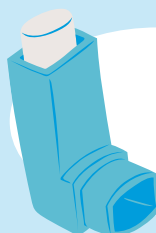
Excessive cough, wheeze and chest tightness

Difficulty speaking



Experiencing shortness of breath at rest

Lips or nail beds turning blue



Reliever (rescue) medication isn't helping

Sweating



Feeling anxiety or fear

WHAT TO DO IN AN ASTHMA ATTACK

An asthma attack can be a life-threatening emergency. Always carry your reliever (rescue) inhaler with you and never hesitate to call 911 if your symptoms persist.

1

Sit up straight.



3

Call 911 if your symptoms persist or worsen.

Do this if you feel worse at any point or if there is no improvement after taking your medication.

2

Take your reliever medication as directed.

This is most commonly a blue inhaler. Use your [Asthma Action Plan](#) for reference.

4

Follow up with your health care provider right away.

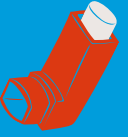


WHAT TO DO **AFTER** AN ASTHMA ATTACK

YOU HAD AN ASTHMA ATTACK. WHAT'S NEXT?



Request an urgent, same day appointment with your health care provider if you had an asthma attack and used your blue reliever inhaler but did not seek medical attention. Even if you feel better, schedule an appointment.



Keep taking your asthma medication as prescribed.



Take the rest of the day to recover after the attack. You may feel physically and emotionally tired, have trouble sleeping, or even have to reschedule social events for when you are feeling well enough.



If your symptoms return or worsen, seek medical attention right away. Do not hesitate to seek medical care.

YOU WENT TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT. WHAT'S NEXT?

If you visited an emergency department after your asthma attack, follow the steps above *AND* the following:



Book an urgent follow-up appointment with your health care provider, even if you feel better.



Inform your HCP of any medications (oral corticosteroids [OCS] or SABA [short-acting beta agonists]) **prescribed to you** in the emergency department.



Develop a plan with your health care provider for tapering off OCS medications and/or how to use your controller medications effectively.

DETERMINE **WHY** YOU WEREN'T IN CONTROL OF YOUR ASTHMA

Work with your health care provider to find out why the attack happened.



Work together with your health care provider to update your Asthma Action Plan.



Review your asthma medications and check your inhaler technique.



Reevaluate your asthma triggers and determine how to avoid them in the future.

A FEW DAYS AFTER AN ASTHMA ATTACK

When you're feeling better:

Take time to clean your home from allergens like dust mites that can set off your asthma symptoms.



Evaluate your exercise routine. Exercise is a great way to strengthen your lungs and support your overall wellbeing.



Reach out to Asthma Canada's Asthma & Allergy HelpLine to connect with a Certified Respiratory Educator who can provide expert support and advice.
1-866-787-4050 / info@asthma.ca



Visit asthma.ca for more education and resources.



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