

Asthma Basics

(Taken from ALA's Asthma 101 curriculum)

Triggers – things that trigger an asthma attack

- Infections: viral respiratory infections
- Foods/allergens, latex, medical conditions
- Irritants: smoke, dust, chalk dust, strong odors, cold air
- Behaviors: emotions, exercise, smoking

Symptoms of an asthma attack



- Wheezing
- Coughing
- Difficulty breathing/ shortness of breath
- Tightness in the chest/ chest pain
- Retractions – neck area and/or muscles in rib area move in and out with each breath

Actions to take for an asthma episode

- Remain calm and reassure the person as you provide assistance
- Stop the person's physical activity and make sure they remain calm (might try belly breathing)
- Remove them from exposure to known triggers
- Have someone stay with the person
- Follow the person's asthma action plan
- Make certain quick relief medicine is available and used properly
- Observe person to be sure he/she improves
- Let the child's emergency contacts know the child experienced breathing difficulties while engaging in physical activity.



Activity can continue when:

- Wheezing has resolved
- There is no chest tightness
- There is no shortness of breath
- Person is able to speak in complete sentences
- Person is able to freely walk around

Call 911 if the quick relief meds aren't working **and:**

- The person's lips or nail beds are turning blue
- The person is hunched over with shoulders raised, straining to breathe
- The person has difficulty completing a sentence without stopping to breathe



**Tulsa Area
Asthma
Steering
Committee**