



# Management of asthma in childcare

Childcare providers (centre and home based) should be aware of their obligations in managing a person experiencing asthma symptoms. The **purchase** of blue reliever medication by a childcare service is governed under Section 235 of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996. The **management** of asthma in a childcare service is governed under Section 256A and 256B of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996.

## What the Regulation says:

### Purchase of blue reliever medication

Section 235 permits purchase of a blue reliever medication by:

- A licensee or adult carer within a childcare service, upon provision of a signed purchase order form
- A childcare provider trained to perform asthma first aid under Section 256B, upon provision of a certificate or document issued by their training provider.

### Management of asthma

Section 256A permits childcare providers to administer an S3 medication to a child, with the written consent of a parent or guardian of the child, at a childcare centre, home or other place where child care is being provided in the course of the service. Section 256B authorises persons who have completed an approved asthma management course to perform asthma first aid at a workplace. Childcare services are considered a workplace under this Section.

**Childcare providers are able to manage an asthma first aid emergency by following either Section 256A or 256B.**

### Under Section 256A:

- Childcare providers are able to administer blue reliever medication to a child who is experiencing asthma symptoms, regardless of whether the child has previously been diagnosed with asthma.

- Childcare providers are able to purchase and store blue reliever medication in their first aid kit upon providing a signed purchase order form to the pharmacy.
- Written parental consent is **essential** prior to administering blue reliever medication to children.
- Education of childcare providers in the management of asthma first aid is **not essential**, however, is highly recommended.

### Under Section 256B:

- Childcare providers who wish to be able to purchase and administer blue reliever medication to perform asthma first aid **must** complete an approved asthma management course (see Queensland Health Fact Sheet HDPR96 Asthma Management Courses).
- Blue reliever medication must be stored in a way that only permits its administration by the person with the approved asthma management training.
- Written parental consent to the administration of blue reliever medication, whilst not essential under this Section, is implied and thus, highly recommended.

### The Asthma Foundation of Queensland recommends childcare services:

- Modify their enrolment documentation to gain in advance parental consent to the administration of blue reliever medication to a child in the event of a suspected asthma emergency, regardless of diagnosis.
- Provide opportunity for all carers to be educated in the management of asthma first aid and accredited under Section 256B as able to purchase and administer blue reliever medication.
- Purchase a blue reliever medication and spacer to store in their first aid kit.
- Proactively manage children presenting with asthma like symptoms.

## Recognising asthma

Asthma can appear at any time in a person's life. A child may experience the symptoms of asthma for the first time whilst in the care of a childcare service. Therefore, it is essential childcare providers are able to detect and treat the signs of an asthma emergency.

The signs of asthma include:

- Shortness of breath
- A feeling of chest tightness
- A dry, irritating and persistent cough that worsens with physical activity or in the evening and early morning
- A wheeze

## Recognising severe asthma

Severe asthma may be indicated by:

- Gasping for breath
- Severe chest tightness
- Inability to speak more than one or two words per breath
- Little or no improvement after using reliever medication
- Feeling frightened or panicked
- Pale and sweaty

The signs of an asthma attack may vary, so a person with asthma may not show all the above signs during a severe attack. If any of these signs are present or if this is the person's first experience of asthma symptoms, call an ambulance first and follow the **Asthma First Aid Plan**.

In children, worsening asthma can sometimes be difficult to recognise. Asthma symptoms can worsen rapidly over a short period of time, particularly in younger children. Do not delay in seeking medical attention.

## Asthma First Aid Plan

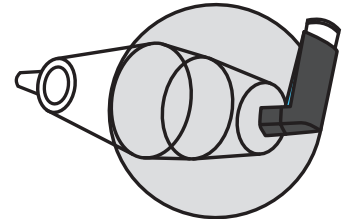
### 1. Sit the person upright, be calm and reassuring.

Do not leave them alone.

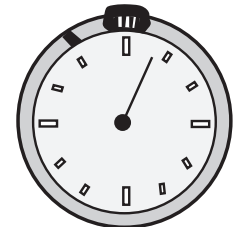


### 2. Give 4 separate puffs of blue reliever.\*

The medication is best given one puff at a time via a spacer device. Ask the person to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff of medication. If a spacer is not available, use the blue reliever puffer on its own.



### 3. Wait 4 minutes.



### 4. If there is little or no improvement repeat steps 2 and 3.

**If there is still no improvement call an ambulance immediately (DIAL 000).**

Continue to repeat steps 2 and 3 while waiting for the ambulance.

