



Asthma
Australia

Asthma

Things to Ask & Tell
your Pharmacist



Call the **1800 ASTHMA** Helpline (1800 278 462)
or visit asthmaaustralia.org.au



YouTube



Things to ask your pharmacist

1. What do I need to know about this asthma medication?
 - How will it help me?
 - When do I take it?
 - How do I take it?
 - Are there side effects?
 - Do other medications affect my asthma?
2. Should I be taking any other medications for my asthma (e.g. a preventer if you haven't already been prescribed one)?
3. Can you show me how to use my asthma medication?
4. Do I need a spacer?
5. I cough, wheeze and sneeze, what hay fever treatment should I be taking and how often?

Things to tell your pharmacist

1. If you are coughing, wheezing or breathless – day or night
2. If you struggle to keep up with normal activity
3. If you need to use your blue/grey reliever puffer more than 2 days per week
4. If you cough, wheeze or sneeze or have symptoms such as, itchy nose or eyes, runny or blocked nose, throat clearing or snoring
5. If you are taking any medications to treat hay fever
6. If you have ever been affected by thunderstorm asthma
7. If you are using any other medications or complementary therapies

If any of these points describe your asthma – see your doctor as soon as possible

Know your medications

There is a wide range of asthma medications. It is important to understand the role medications play in helping asthma, and keeping well. The most common are shown here:

	Reliever – Blue/Grey colour
What it does	Relaxes tight airways for up to 4 hours
Time to work	Very quickly – in about 4 minutes
When to take it	— When you have symptoms — Emergency — Before exercise as prescribed
Helpful to know	Carry it with you always in case of symptoms



	Preventer
What it does	— Soothes airways — Reduces swelling — Reduces mucus
Time to work	Slowly - days to weeks
When to take it	Every day as prescribed — even when you feel well
Helpful to know	The key to keeping well with asthma



	Combination Preventers
What it does	Is a preventer, but also helps to relax airway muscles
Time to work	Fairly quickly, but more improvement with continued use
When to take it	Every day as prescribed — even when you feel well
Helpful to know	Prescribed for people who have symptoms even with regular preventer use



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia endorses this brochure and encourages people with asthma to **Ask your pharmacist** any questions about medications or healthcare in general



Asthma First Aid

1 Sit the person upright

- Be calm and reassuring
- Do not leave them alone



2 Give 4 separate puffs of blue/grey reliever puffer

- Shake puffer
- Put 1 puff into spacer
- Take 4 breaths from spacer

Repeat until 4 puffs have been taken

Remember: Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths

OR give 2 separate doses of a Bricanyl inhaler (age 6 & over) or a Symbicort inhaler (over 12)



3 Wait 4 minutes

- If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above

OR give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler



4 If there is still no improvement call emergency assistance Dial Triple Zero

- Say 'ambulance' and that someone is having an asthma attack
- Keep giving 4 separate puffs every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives

OR give 1 dose of a Bricanyl or Symbicort every 4 minutes - up to 3 more doses of Symbicort



Call emergency assistance immediately - Dial Triple Zero (000)

- If the person is not breathing
- If the person's asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- If the person is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- If you are not sure if it's asthma
- If the person is known to have Anaphylaxis - follow their Anaphylaxis Action Plan, then give Asthma First Aid

Blue/grey reliever medication is unlikely to harm, even if the person does not have asthma



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