

Over 700,000 New Zealanders suffer from respiratory illness such as asthma. We have some of the highest rates in the world, and it's increasing!



Healthy workplaces are dry, warm and pollution-free

Potential asthma triggers in the workplace

- Smoking or being exposed to second-hand smoke
- Chemicals and dusts
- Fumes
- Allergens (from dust mites, fragrances, etc)
- Physical exertion
- Emotions such as stress
- Colds and flu viruses



Minimise potential triggers to create a healthy environment

- Be a smokefree workplace
- Keep your workplace warm, dry and remove condensation
- Ensure there is minimal dust
- Ensure there isn't any harmful mould
- Limit the use of strong smelling cleaners etc
- Use heaters and ventilation systems with a high-grade filter



Know who has asthma

It's important to know which members of your team have asthma and to understand their asthma action plan, in case they become unwell at work. An asthma action plan identifies when a person is well, what symptoms to look out for when they are unwell, and when to administer asthma first aid.



Are you at risk of developing asthma at work?

Sometimes, people who have never had asthma before can develop it through an allergic reaction to a substance in the workplace. This may happen even after working safely with the substance for years. Sometimes the symptoms don't develop until hours after the exposure, so it is often difficult to identify the workplace as the cause. Other people develop asthma for the first time in the workplace after heavy exposure to irritants which affect the breathing tubes, such as welding fumes or gaseous vapours.

Common workplace substances or processes that can cause asthma problems:

- Working with chemicals such as those used in some paints and glues, foam manufacture etc, or epoxy resins
- Working with wood dusts including western red cedar, rimu and some particle boards
- Being exposed to metal fumes or dusts
- Being exposed to dusts from organic sources such as flour, animals, insects etc

Asthma First Aid

It is important for everyone in a workplace to know asthma first aid in case of an emergency.
In an emergency:

A

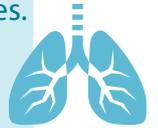
Assess

Mild? Short of breath, wheeze, cough, chest tightness.

Moderate? Loud wheeze, breathing difficulty, can only speak in short sentences.

Severe? Distressed, gasping for breath, difficulty speaking two words, blueness around the mouth.

If the person has severe asthma or is frightened, call an Ambulance 111



S

Sit

Sit the person upright and stay with them.

If mild, treat with 2 doses of reliever inhaler.



T

Treat

Treat with 6 doses of any reliever inhaler.

This type of inhaler should be used with a spacer if possible.

One puff of medicine at a time. Use 6 breaths per puff.



H

Help

If not improving after 6 minutes, call an ambulance. Continue to use the reliever inhaler with 6 doses every 6 minutes until help arrives.

Remember:

- 6 doses of medication or 6 puffs of medication
- 6 breaths per dose or 6 breaths per puff
- Wait 6 minutes



M

A

Monitor

If improving after 6 minutes, keep monitoring.

If necessary, repeat doses of reliever inhaler.



All OK

When free of wheeze, cough or breathlessness, return to quiet activity.
If symptoms recur, repeat treatment and rest.

Always see your doctor.



For more information and resources visit our website or get in touch.

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