

ASTHMA AND EXERCISE

Exercise can trigger symptoms in children who have asthma. This is known as ‘exercise-induced asthma’. Usually, it is easily managed but exercise should be included in your child’s asthma plan.

SPORT IS HEALTHY FOR CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA

Asthma is not a reason for children to avoid sport. It is important that children with asthma continue to exercise to help them stay fit and healthy.

Asthma symptoms can be triggered by breathing in cold, dry air. But if your child’s asthma is properly controlled, they should be able to do as much exercise as they like.

MANAGING ASTHMA WHILE PLAYING SPORT

Exercise-induced asthma can be prevented by taking the following steps:

- Tell your child to take their reliever medication 15 minutes before warming up, if this is part of their asthma plan, or if they or you are concerned they may need it.
- Make sure they warm up properly.
- Watch for asthma symptoms during exercise and give your child reliever medication if symptoms appear. They should only return to exercise when the symptoms have disappeared. If the symptoms appear again, give them more reliever and don’t let them return to exercise.
- Remember, asthma symptoms can occur up to 30 minutes after exercise stops. Have the reliever medication on hand.

- Children can forget to take their medication. Make sure you remind them and tell any adults who are supervising them that your child may need reliever medication while they are playing sport.

If your child needs to receive reliever medication:

- Sit your child comfortably and reassure them.
- Give them 4 puffs of reliever medication, preferably through a spacer.
- If there is still no improvement after 4 minutes, they may be having a severe asthma attack. Call triple zero (000) for an ambulance immediately.
- Keep giving 4 puffs of reliever every 4 minutes until the ambulance arrives. Children should not have more reliever than this.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ASTHMA PLAN

Every child with asthma should have a written asthma plan. It should contain information on how to recognise asthma symptoms and what to do if they appear.

Your doctor will develop the asthma plan with you. Tell them if your child will be playing sport so they can include relevant information in the plan.

Tell your child’s coach or trainer about the asthma and give them a copy of the asthma plan so they know what to do if your child develops symptoms.