



An asthmatic comes to your office wheezing and struggling to breath!

Yes, the ED is the best place for one of these patients who may be suffering from a life-threatening asthma attack.

While you wait for EMS to arrive, here is what you should do:

## TIP

1. Transport from office to the ED via ambulance should be considered for severe exacerbations marked by a patient with one or more of the following; breathlessness at rest, drowsiness, inability to speak in full sentences, RR >30, HR >120, SpO2 <90 %
2. While the patient is awaiting transport:
  - a. Administer SABA (Ventolin/Salbutamol) 4-6 puffs via MDI with spacer (or albuterol 2.5 mg/3 mL nebulized ) every 20 minutes for the first hour.
  - b. Most patients suffering from a significant exacerbation should be administered systemic glucocorticoids- Prednisone 40-60mg orally (continued for 5-7 days) OR Dexamethasone 12-16 mg daily for 1-2 days.
  - c. Administer supplemental oxygen to maintain SpO2 >92%
3. When do you consider your patient to be getting better and eligible to be considered for disposition home? Symptoms decreased, vitals stabilized (normal HR, RR and SpO2 >94% RA) with PEF >70% of predicted or personal best.
  - Advise to complete 5-7 day Prednisone course
  - Advise to use SABA as needed (which may be q3-4 hours for the first 48 hours)
  - Consider increasing controller medication by 1 step if not already on maximal GC/LABA
  - Review the patient's asthma action plan and re-iterate correct inhaler techniques and avoidance of triggers
  - Schedule patient for follow up in 1-week (or less if sent to the ED).

**Tip: The Wheezing Asthmatic**

# TRICK

Long before any asthma patient arrives at your office experiencing respiratory difficulties, it is important to take stock of what you have on hand to rapidly relieve their symptoms. Be sure to have Ventolin with a chamber, oral corticosteroids and controlled oxygen (tubing and nasal prongs) in the office. It is much better to have them at the ready and never need them than to NOT have them when your patient with asthma arrives in distress!

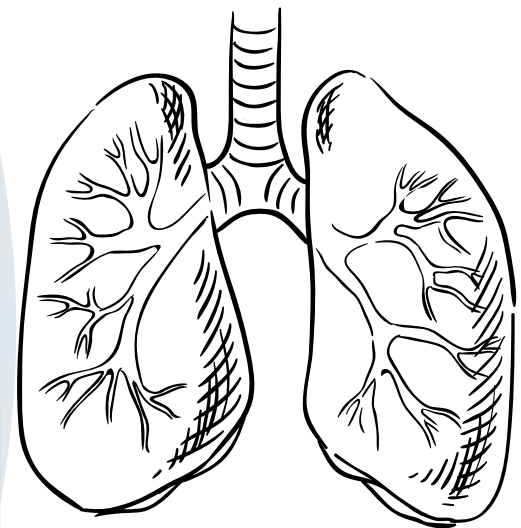
Printed instructions for all types of inhalers are found on the asthma.ca website: <https://asthma.ca/get-help/treatment/how-to-use/>

Signed up for Pathways? Inhaler education videos are available on <https://pathwaysbc.ca/> under Resources -> Patient Information -> Respiratory. You can email the videos directly to your patient from the Pathways website

## Looking for other Personal/Patient Resources?



- From Asthma.ca Medicines and Treatment: <https://asthma.ca/get-help/treatment/>
- From Asthma.ca Resource (pdf) for Medications- Use as prescribed: [https://asthma.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/BreatheEasy\\_Medications-Final-2022-EN.pdf](https://asthma.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/BreatheEasy_Medications-Final-2022-EN.pdf)
- From Pathways for Physicians: Asthma Inhaled Medication Table Update: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/practitioner-pro/provincial-academic-detailing-service/pad-refills/padrefillsasthmadec2020.pdf>
- From Pathways for Physicians: Child Health BC Provincial Asthma Guideline Pediatric Asthma Education Checklist : [https://pathwaysbc-production-content-item-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/4120/original/CHBC\\_Provincial\\_Asthma\\_Guideline\\_Education\\_Checklist\\_May\\_2018.pdf?1586895249](https://pathwaysbc-production-content-item-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/4120/original/CHBC_Provincial_Asthma_Guideline_Education_Checklist_May_2018.pdf?1586895249)



**Tip continued ...**