



Calderdale and Huddersfield

NHS Foundation Trust

Patient Information Leaflet

Asthma - Patient Information Leaflet – Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC)

What is asthma?

Asthma is a long-term condition that affects the airways (breathing tubes) in your lungs.

When asthma is triggered, the airways can become:

- Inflamed (swollen)
- Narrowed
- Filled with mucus

This makes it harder to breathe.

Asthma symptoms can come and go.

Common asthma symptoms

You may experience:

- Wheezing (a whistling sound when breathing)
- Breathlessness
- Chest tightness
- Coughing, especially at night or early morning

What is an asthma flare-up?

An asthma flare-up (exacerbation) happens when symptoms suddenly get worse.

This may be caused by:

- Colds or viral infections
- Allergies (e.g. pollen, dust, pets)
- Smoke or air pollution
- Exercise
- Stress or emotions
- Not taking preventer inhalers regularly

Treatment in SDEC

You may have been treated with:

- Reliever inhalers (e.g. salbutamol)
- Steroid tablets (e.g. prednisolone)
- Oxygen therapy (if needed)
- Nebulisers (medicine delivered as a mist)

These treatments help open your airways and reduce inflammation.

Your inhalers

Most people with asthma use:

Reliever inhaler (usually blue)

- Used when symptoms occur
- Works quickly to open airways
- Should always be carried with you

Preventer inhaler

- Taken every day, even when well
- Reduces inflammation and prevents attacks
- Important to use regularly for long-term control

Steroid tablets

If you have been given steroid tablets (e.g. prednisolone):

- Take them exactly as prescribed
- Usually a short course (5–10 days)
- Do not stop early unless told to

They help reduce airway inflammation after a flare-up.

What you can do to help

- Take inhalers as prescribed
- Use a spacer if recommended
- Avoid known triggers where possible
- Stop smoking (if applicable)
- Keep a written asthma action plan if you have one
- Attend regular asthma reviews with your GP or asthma nurse

When to seek urgent help

Call 999 or attend Emergency Department immediately if:

- You are very short of breath or struggling to speak
- Your reliever inhaler is not helping or lasts less than 3 hours
- You are getting worse quickly
- Your lips or fingernails look blue
- You feel exhausted or drowsy due to breathing difficulty

When to seek medical advice

Contact your GP or NHS 111 if:

- Symptoms are not improving after treatment
- You are using your reliever inhaler more often than usual
- You are waking at night with asthma symptoms
- You are unsure about your inhaler technique

Follow-up care

You may be advised to:

- See your GP or asthma nurse within 48–72 hours
- Have your inhalers reviewed
- Update or create an asthma action plan
- Have a peak flow measurement or lung function tests

Important safety message

Asthma can usually be well controlled with the right treatment. After a flare-up, it is important to:

- Complete any prescribed medication
- Use inhalers correctly
- Attend follow-up appointments

Key message

Asthma is a manageable condition. With the right inhalers and follow-up care, most people can prevent future attacks and live normally.

Contact information

If you have concerns after leaving SDEC, please contact:

SDEC / Hospital Advice Line: _____

GP: _____

Out of hours: NHS 111

In an emergency, call 999.