

# All about asthma

## This book is about asthma

You can get asthma at any age.

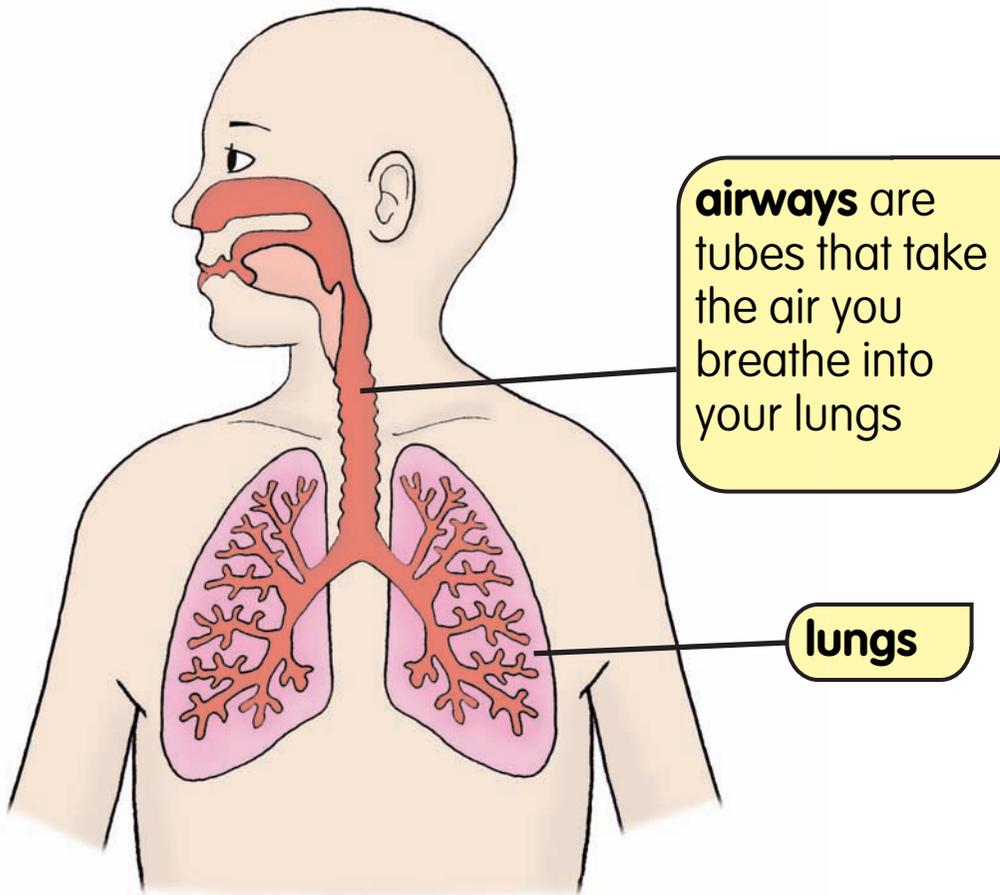
Sometimes it starts when you are a child.

Sometimes it starts when you are an adult.

It is hard to say what causes asthma.

This book can help you look after your asthma.





## What happens if you have asthma?

If you have asthma your **airways** don't work as well.

- You cough a lot.
- You **wheeze**.
- It is hard to breathe.
- Your chest feels tight.

**Wheeze** – a noisy whistling sound in your chest when you breathe.

You might have all of these symptoms.

You might only have some of them.

## What can make your asthma worse?

Some things can make your asthma worse.

Things that make your asthma worse are called triggers.

Everyone has different triggers.

Most people have more than one trigger.

## Here are some triggers



**pollen**



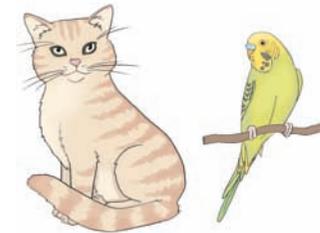
**stress**



**perfume**



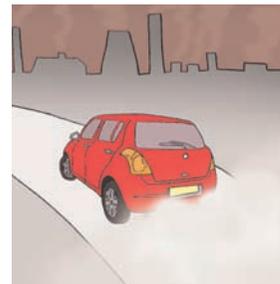
**changes in weather**



**some animals**



**colds**



**pollution**



**cigarette smoke**



**mould and damp**

## Medicines that can help your asthma

### Inhalers

There are two kinds of inhaler.

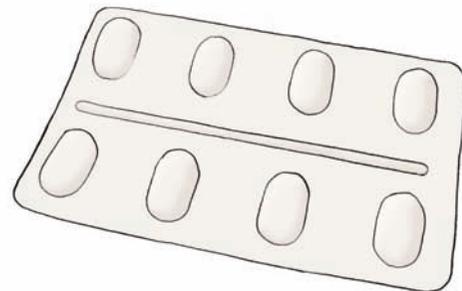
One is called a reliever.

One is called a preventer.

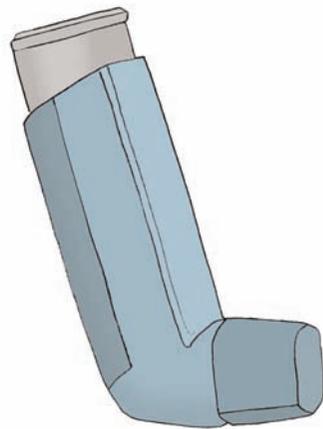
Inhalers can be different shapes.

Sometimes they are different colours.

Inhalers are sometimes called puffers or pumps.



You might have tablets for your asthma too.

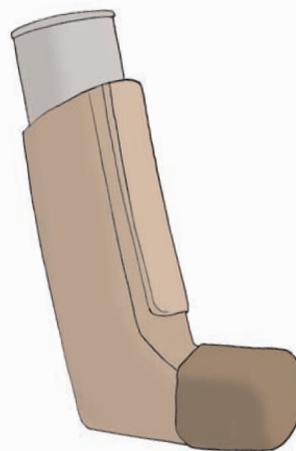


## Relievers

Reliever inhalers are usually blue.

You take them when your asthma feels bad.

They make it easier to breathe.



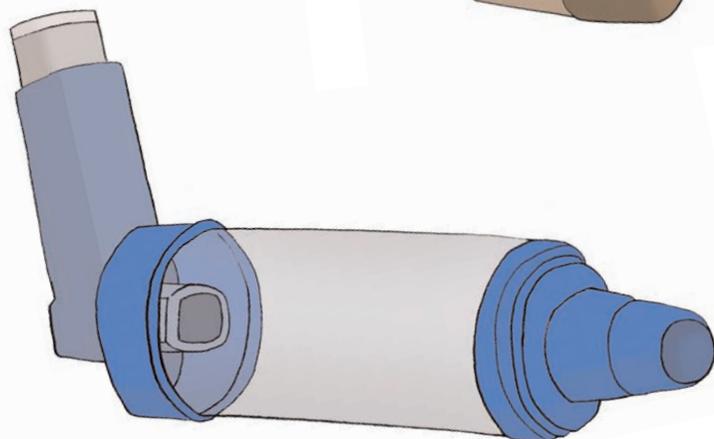
## Preventers

Preventer inhalers are usually brown.

You take them every day.

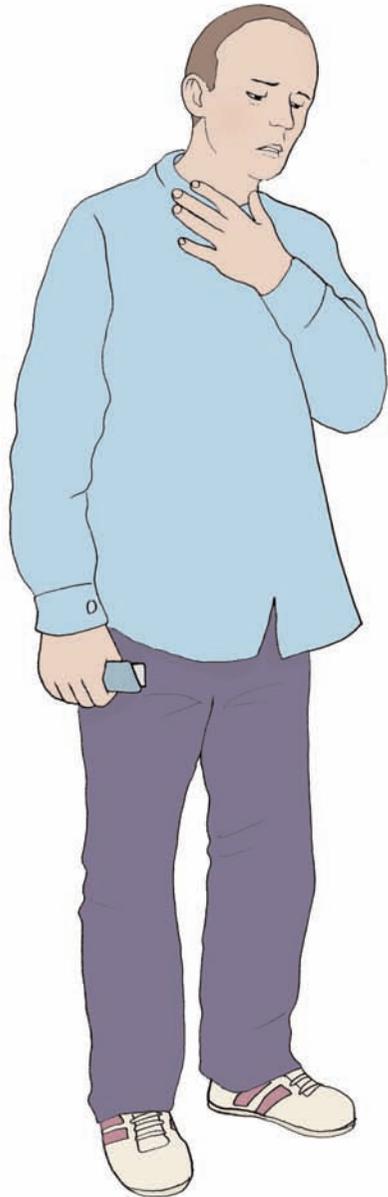
You take them even if you feel well.

They make your airways work better.



## Spacer

Sometimes you use a spacer with your inhaler. A spacer is a plastic tube that helps you get your medicine.



## Asthma attack

Sometimes you might have an asthma attack. It can happen even if you use your inhaler.

You are having an asthma attack if:

- you need to use your blue inhaler a lot
- your chest feels tight
- you are coughing and wheezing a lot
- you cannot breathe well
- it is hard to talk.

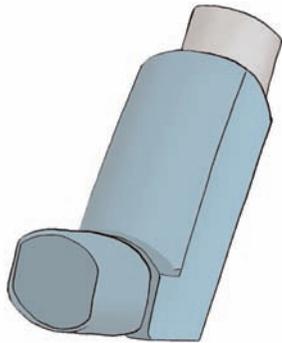
## What to do if you are having an asthma attack



1. Take two puffs of your blue inhaler.



2. Sit down and try to relax.



3. Take one puff of your inhaler every minute until you feel better. You can take up to ten puffs of your blue inhaler.



4. If you need to take ten puffs of your blue inhaler, call 999 for help.

Call **999** if you are worried at any time.

## Will I have to go to hospital?

You might have to go to hospital.

Take your inhaler with you.

## What to do after an asthma attack

Go and see your doctor the next day.

Your doctor will check if your asthma is OK.

Go and see your doctor again in a week.

This is to make sure your asthma is still OK.

## Going to the doctor about your asthma

Every year you should go to your doctor for an asthma review. This is a check up for your asthma.

Your doctor will:

- use a **peak flow meter** to check your breathing
- check you are using your inhaler properly
- see if your asthma is better or worse
- talk to you about looking after your asthma.

**Peak flow meter** – a tube you blow into. It tells the doctor how good your breathing is.





## Being healthy is good for your asthma

Here are some things you can do to be healthy:

- eat **healthy food**
- do some **exercise**
- do things that make you **feel happy and relaxed.**





## Exercise

Exercise is good for you.

There are lots of ways to keep fit.

Keep your blue inhaler with you when you exercise.

## What if exercise makes your asthma worse?

For some people exercise is a trigger.

Talk to your doctor before you start exercising.

Start with gentle exercise like walking or **yoga**.

**Yoga** – gentle stretching where you put your body into different positions.



## Stop smoking

Smoking is bad for you.

Smoking is bad for your asthma.

Someone smoking near you can make your asthma worse.

Talk to your doctor if you smoke.

Your doctor can help you to stop.

There are groups to support you.

Stopping smoking is good for you.

## These people have asthma



'Last summer I had a dry cough that wouldn't go away. I went to see my doctor. She tested my breathing and gave me a blue pump to use when my asthma feels bad.'

'I felt a bit wheezy. Stress makes my asthma flare up. The doctor told me I hadn't been looking after myself. She gave me a brown pump to use every day.'

# Your asthma

Put something about your own asthma here.

# Other information to help you



All About Asthma – Asthma Attack Card

- what to do in an asthma attack



All About Asthma – Inhaler Card

- reminds you when to use your inhalers



Call 0800 121 62 55 to get these for free or go to the website [www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk).



**Asthma UK is a charity.**

**We aim to improve the lives of people with asthma in the UK.**

**If you have any questions about your asthma speak to your doctor or call our Adviceline.**



**0800 121 62 44**

**[www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk)**

Thanks to these people who helped us from The Elfrida Society: Maz Bello, Colin Dulice, Savas Ibrahim, Vanessa Martin, Andrew Naylor, June Patterson, Pauline Robertson and Yvonne Swift. The Elfrida Society is a charity for adults with learning disabilities.

