

# Asthma attack response

A suggestion for implementing the strategy  
'Recognise and respond to an asthma attack '  
from the Guide: [Asthma and learning](#)

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## **Includes:**

- Asthma first aid
- Response to an asthma attack
- Asthma emergency treatment
- Response to difficulty breathing
- Emergency treatment
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Asthma and learning](#)

Strategy: [Recognise and respond to an asthma attack](#)

Suggestion: [Asthma attack response](#)

Date

10 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/asthma-and-learning/asthma-attack-response](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/asthma-and-learning/asthma-attack-response)

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## Asthma first aid

The six steps for delivering first aid support to someone having an asthma attack are explained in this short video.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/219931468>

No captions or transcript



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## Asthma emergency treatment

Respond quickly if a child collapses and appears to have difficulty breathing.

### With spacer

1. Shake inhaler and insert inhaler mouthpiece into spacer.
2. Place spacer mouthpiece in person's mouth and press the canister once.
3. Ask the person to breathe in and out normally for about 6 breaths.
4. Repeat in quick succession until 6 puffs have been given.

### Without spacer

1. Shake inhaler.
2. Place mouthpiece in the person's mouth.
3. Give 1 puff as the person inhales slowly and steadily.
4. Ask the person to hold that breath for 6 seconds, then take 6 normal breaths.
5. Repeat as required.

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## Response to difficulty breathing

If a child or young person collapses and appears to have difficulty breathing, call an ambulance immediately whether or not the person is known to have asthma.

Follow the Asthma + Respiratory Foundation's response procedure for someone's first asthma attack.

- Call an ambulance immediately (DIAL 111).
- Give six puffs of a reliever inhaler.
- Six breaths for each puff.
- Repeat every six minutes, if little or no improvement.

No harm is likely to result from giving a reliever to someone who does not have asthma.

Note: An asthma emergency kit can be purchased from Asthma + Respiratory Foundation NZ. This includes a letter of Authorisation for Reliever Inhaler. This can be used only by schools and colleges in accordance with [Ministry of Health Guidelines](#).

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## Emergency treatment

The infographic is titled "Emergency treatment" and is set against a black background. It is divided into two main columns: "With spacer" on the left and "Without spacer" on the right. In the center, the words "Emergency treatment" are written in large white font. The "With spacer" column has four colored boxes: a blue box with "1 puff of reliever" and "6 breaths", a light blue box with "repeat 6 times", a grey box with "every 6 minutes", a red box with "dial 111", and a green box with "Repeat until help arrives". The "Without spacer" column has four colored boxes: a teal box with "6 puffs of reliever", a blue box with "every 6 minutes", a red box with "Dial 111", and a green box with "Repeat until help arrives".

**With spacer**

1 puff of reliever → 6 breaths

repeat 6 times

every 6 minutes

dial 111

**Repeat**  
until help arrives

**Emergency treatment**

**Without spacer**

6 puffs of reliever

every 6 minutes

Dial 111

**Repeat**  
until help arrives

Source:

Asthma + Respiratory Foundation NZ

<https://learnaboutlungs.asthmaandrespiratory.org.nz/mystudent/#/id/5aa6fb38d4ede20e7f9033e3>

[View full image \(293 KB\)](#)

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## Useful resources

First aid information.



### What to do in an emergency

Signs of an acute asthma attack requiring immediate action and an emergency plan are described in this information page.

Publisher: Asthma NZ

[Visit website](#)



### Asthma

First aid information outlining what to do during an asthma attack.

Publisher: St John NZ

[Visit website](#)

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