



ASTHMA+  
LUNG UK

# ASTHMA ATTACK RECOVERY PLAN



This booklet has the information you need to help you recover from an asthma attack, feel better more quickly, and reduce your risk of having another attack.

## Three steps to recovery

- 1 Book an urgent appointment with your GP or asthma nurse.** It's important to see them the same day if you had your asthma attack at home. And within two days if you were treated in hospital.
- 2 Keep taking your asthma medicines as prescribed.** Your usual preventer medicine works away in the background to lower your risk of symptoms and attacks. A short course of steroid tablets prescribed by your GP helps you recover from your asthma attack by dealing with the inflammation and swelling in your airways.
- 3 Take time to recover.** Lots of people feel physically and emotionally tired after an asthma attack, so try to rest as much as you need to. Ask family or friends to help out with children, or get signed off work by your GP. Everyone's different, so do what feels right for you.

## When do I need to see my GP or asthma nurse?

Book an appointment if:

**You dealt with your asthma attack at home by using your reliever inhaler (usually blue).** Even if you didn't have to call an ambulance. This is so they can check you're well and review your medicines.

**You went to hospital or called an ambulance.** You need to book a follow-up appointment with your GP or asthma nurse within 48 hours of leaving the hospital or being treated by paramedics. They can check your notes to see what happened and give you personal recovery advice.

**You had an asthma attack over two weeks ago, but didn't see your GP at the time.** Even if you feel well, it's important to see your GP or asthma nurse. Your asthma may still not be well controlled, and you might be at risk of another asthma attack.

**You used any of your 'rescue pack' of steroids.** If your asthma got bad enough that you had to take the steroid pills your GP gave you, see your GP or asthma nurse.

## How will my GP or asthma nurse help?

In your urgent appointment, your GP or asthma nurse may:

- **Prescribe oral steroid tablets.** A short course of steroid tablets like prednisolone will calm down the inflammation in your airways. You usually take this alongside your regular asthma medicines.
- **Check you're not at risk of another attack.** This is especially important if you didn't go to hospital.
- **Review your asthma medicines and asthma action plan.** A change of dose or a tweak to your inhaler technique could help prevent another asthma attack.
- **Update your medical records** to show you've had an asthma attack.

## After your appointment

- **Keep taking your medicines** and looking after yourself in the way you agreed with your GP or asthma nurse.
- It's a good idea to **track your symptoms.** Try doing this on your phone or on a calendar.

## Take action if your symptoms get worse

If your symptoms are getting worse at any time after your appointment, book another appointment with your GP or asthma nurse as soon as possible or call 111. You can go to an NHS walk-in centre if you can't get an appointment.

You should also book a new appointment if you've finished a course of oral steroid tablets prescribed by your doctor and are still having symptoms. They can give you more tablets if you need them.

Respiratory nurse specialist, Kathy, says...



See your GP or asthma nurse after an asthma attack to support your recovery and lower your risk of another attack.

## Four tips to prevent another asthma attack

1. **Use your preventer medicine as prescribed.** Taking your preventer every day stops your airways getting too inflamed and makes them less likely to react to triggers.
2. **Check your inhaler technique. This helps the medicine get to your lungs, where it's needed.** Your GP or asthma nurse can check your technique for you. You can also watch how-to videos on our website: [asthma.org.uk/advice/inhaler-videos](https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhaler-videos)
3. **Watch out for triggers.** Keep a record of any triggers – old or new – that you think give you asthma symptoms.
4. **Use your asthma action plan.** Using an asthma action plan makes it easier to manage your asthma symptoms and means you're less likely to end up in hospital with your asthma. If you don't have one yet, you can download one for free at [asthma.org.uk/advice/resources](https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/resources) and ask your GP or asthma nurse to fill it in with you.



## Know the signs of an asthma attack

Here's how to spot the signs of a future asthma attack:

- Your reliever inhaler (usually blue) isn't helping or isn't lasting four hours.
- You're breathless and finding it hard to speak, eat or sleep.
- Your symptoms are getting worse.
- Your breathing is getting faster and you can't catch your breath properly.

## What to do in an asthma attack

1. Sit up straight - try to keep calm.
2. Take one puff of your reliever inhaler (usually blue) every 30-60 seconds up to 10 puffs.
3. If you feel worse at any point OR you don't feel better after 10 puffs **call 999 for an ambulance.**
4. If the ambulance has not arrived after 10 minutes and your symptoms are not improving, repeat step 2.
5. If your symptoms are no better after repeating step 2, and the ambulance has still not arrived, **contact 999 again immediately.**

Even if you feel better, make an urgent same-day appointment with your GP or asthma nurse.

### IMPORTANT!

This asthma attack information is not designed for people on a MART medicine plan. Speak to your GP or asthma nurse to get the correct asthma attack information.



# Your online asthma community is always there for you

Swap ideas with others who  
have asthma:

**facebook.com/AsthmaLungUK**

Get information, tips and ideas  
on everything from inhalers to  
triggers and managing your  
asthma:

**AsthmaAndLung.org.uk/  
get-support**

Get the latest asthma news  
by following us on Twitter:

**@AsthmaUKLung**

Get more health advice and  
asthma news with Asthma UK  
email updates

**AsthmaAndLung.org.uk**

Having asthma can be  
challenging sometimes,  
especially if your diagnosis is  
new, or if you've had a lot of  
symptoms lately. Make sure  
you always get the help you  
need by taking five minutes to  
write down a list of who you  
can call.

**Friends, family and colleagues**  
can sometimes help just by  
listening. Don't be afraid to share  
with them how you're feeling.

**Your healthcare team** –  
GP, asthma nurse, specialist  
consultant and pharmacist –  
is on hand to provide whatever  
care and support you need.

**Asthma + Lung UK's  
respiratory nurse specialists**  
will ease your worries  
about asthma. Just call  
**0300 222 5800**  
or message via WhatsApp  
on **07378 606 728**  
(Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm).

## ASTHMA QUESTIONS?

Ask our respiratory nurse specialists

Call **0300 222 5800**

WhatsApp **07378 606 728**

(Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm)

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