

How to recognise Mildly Worsening Asthma Symptoms

Activity	Child continues with usual activities. May be a bit quieter than usual.
Wheezing	Very slight. Sometimes may only be heard by putting your ear on child's chest.
Note	Wheezing may not occur in all children with worsening asthma.
Muscle Use	Muscle at front of neck may be going in and out slightly with each breath.
Breathing	Breathing rate is normally between 20-30 breaths per minute. (Rate decreases as child gets older). May be slightly faster than usual.
Cough	May be coughing more during the night or when running/jumping.
Talking	No noticeable change from usual.
What to do	Give 2-4 puffs of reliever inhaler, one puff at a time, via a spacer. If no improvement within 30 minutes give 6 puffs. If symptoms return or become worse within the next 24 hours contact Practice Nurse/GP or Accident & Medical Clinic for advice.

How to recognise Moderately Worsening Asthma Symptoms

Activity	Stopping to rest now and then. May have bursts of activity but still needs to rest more often than usual.
Wheezing	"Whistle" sound may be heard when breathing out.
Muscle Use	Muscle at front of neck sucking in and out when breathing. Area below ribs sucking in when breathing.
Breathing	Breathing rate is noticeably faster than usual.
Cough	May be coughing frequently.
Talking	Needs to take a breath after 2-3 words or in the middle of a sentence.
What to do	Give 6 puffs of reliever inhaler, one puff at a time, via a spacer. If no improvement within 20 minutes repeat 6 puffs. If still no improvement within 20 minutes of 2nd lot of 6 puffs take the child to doctor or Accident & Medical Clinic Immediately .

How to recognise Severe Symptoms *This is a serious situation*

Activity	Sitting very still, wanting to be cuddled/held. Not playing at all or normal activities severely reduced.
Wheezing	Obvious "whistle" heard when breathing in and out .
Note	If at any time the wheeze disappears with no improvement in child's activity or breathing rate, dial 111 and ask for an ambulance. Give 6 puffs of inhaler (one puff at a time_ through a spacer/ mask every 6 minutes until ambulance arrives.
Muscle Use	Muscles at front of neck, the area just under ribs, and the area between ribs will be sucking in and out when breathing. Child may hunch over.
Breathing	Breathing rate is very fast compared to usual.
Talking	Needs to take a breath after one or two words or not talking at all.
Colour	Lips and/or fingernails may look bluish.
What to do	Take immediate action. If you are alone, dial 111 immediately and ask for an ambulance. Give 6 puffs of inhaler (one puff at a time) through a spacer/mask every 6 minutes until seen by emergency services. If two people are present, 1st person dial 111 for ambulance and 2nd person administer medication.

For more information on asthma management, support and resources contact Asthma NZ

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*In case of an emergency, dial 111