
Asthma and teenagers

Summary

- Asthma affects about one in ten teenagers in Australia.
 - Make sure you keep your reliever puffer and spacer with you all the time.
 - Talk to your doctor about what your triggers are, when your asthma symptoms get worse, and how often you are taking your reliever medication, and then get a written Asthma Action Plan.
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Asthma affects about one in ten teenagers in Australia. By understanding and managing your asthma, you can keep it under control and stop it affecting your study, work, sport and social activities.

Information about asthma for teenagers

Some things that are useful to know if you have been diagnosed with asthma include:

- You can continue to do what you used to do. Just make sure you look after your asthma.
- Lots of people have asthma (11.2 per cent of the Australian population).
- Make an appointment with your doctor to talk about your asthma. (It is recommended that you have an asthma review at least once a year.) This will help make sure you are able to manage your asthma and keep doing the things you like to do.
- At your asthma review, talk to your doctor about what your triggers are, when your asthma symptoms get worse, and how often you are taking your reliever medication, and then ask for an Asthma Action Plan.
- Learn about asthma first aid and make sure you know what to do if you ever have an asthma attack – this will be on your Asthma Action Plan.
- Teach your friends asthma first aid, then they can help you if you have an asthma flare-up.
- Learn about your medication – what each type does and how to take it properly.
- Find out what triggers your asthma symptoms and try to avoid your triggers if you can (apart from exercise).
- Make sure you keep your reliever puffer and spacer with you at all times (they could save your life).
- Learn how to recognise what your early asthma symptoms are to help prevent a more serious asthma attack.
- Download the [**Kiss My Asthma**](#) app to help manage your asthma.

Exercise for teenagers with asthma

Although exercise can sometimes be a trigger for your asthma, it is also a great way of keeping fit and on top of your asthma.

There are many top Australian athletes who manage their asthma well, which enables them to compete at a very high level.

If you normally have asthma symptoms during exercise, remember to:

- If written on your Asthma Action Plan, take your reliever medication up to 15 minutes before warming up (this can help keep your airways open).
 - Warm up as usual.
 - Begin your activity and if you have any asthma symptoms, take your reliever medication straight away. You can go back to exercise if the symptoms go away. Remember the 'two strikes and you're out' rule – if asthma symptoms come back for a second time, stop the activity and take your reliever medication again. Do not return to the activity that day.
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- Cool down as usual, but also watch for asthma symptoms (they can appear up to half an hour after you have stopped being active).

You should be able to exercise as often as you wish. If you regularly experience asthma symptoms during exercise, see your doctor.

For more information about asthma and physical activity, visit [Asthma Australia](#).

Teenagers – tips to control your asthma

You can manage your own asthma through these simple steps:

- Use a spacer with your puffer to greatly increase the amount of medication reaching your airways (it doesn't have to be the 'football' spacer, there are many smaller types of spacers that fit easily into a pencil case or bag).
- Make sure you always have your reliever puffer and spacer with you or nearby (this is what you will use when you have asthma symptoms).
- Make sure that you understand what is on your Asthma Action Plan and that you know what to do when you have asthma symptoms and in an asthma emergency.
- Remember to take your medication, particularly your prescribed preventer medication, as it can take time to begin to work in your body (up to several weeks). It will help improve your asthma so that you can begin to reduce the amount of reliever medication you use.
- Try to avoid your asthma triggers as much as possible, except for exercise.
- Download the [Kiss My Asthma](#) app to help manage your asthma.

Where to get help

- Your **GP (doctor)**
- **Pharmacist**
- Asthma educator
- School nurse
- **Asthma Australia** Tel. 1800 ASTHMA (**1800 278 462**)

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:

Asthma Australia

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