



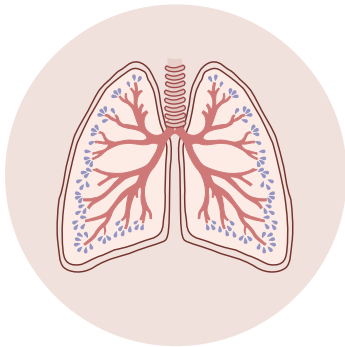
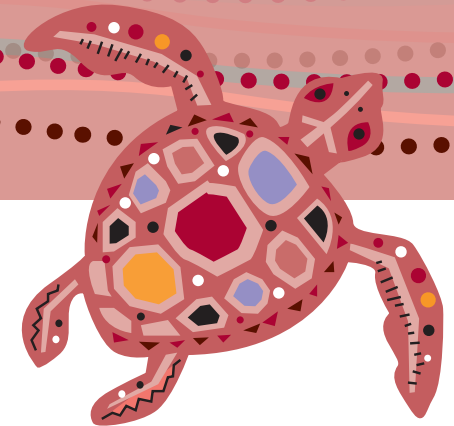
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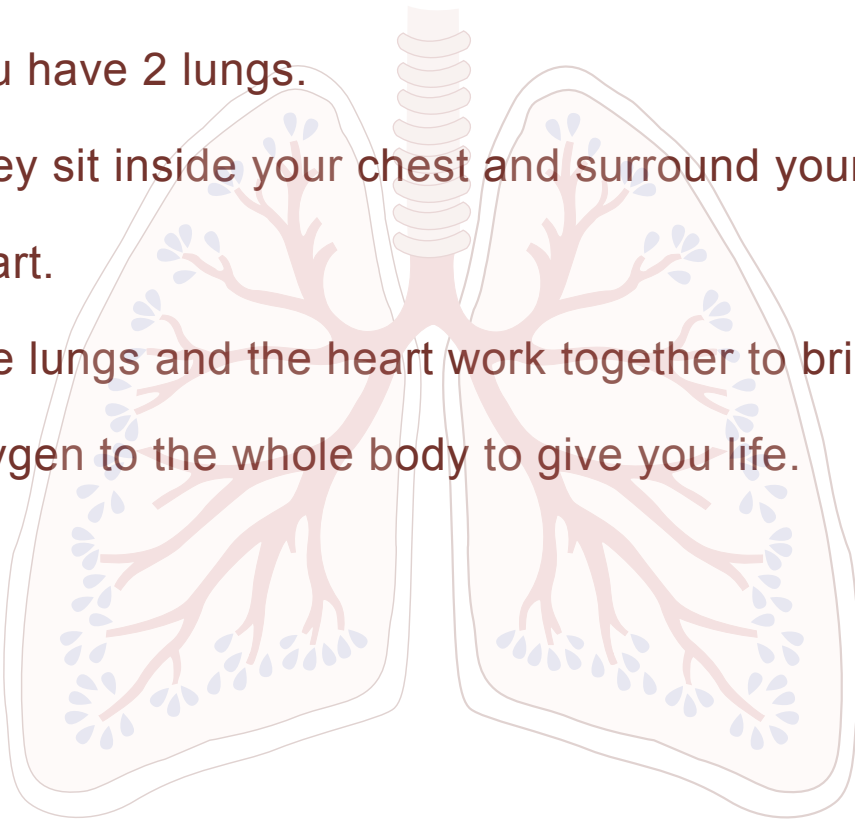
# Asthma

(Short wind) in children



# The lungs

- You have 2 lungs.
- They sit inside your chest and surround your heart.
- The lungs and the heart work together to bring oxygen to the whole body to give you life.



# The lungs

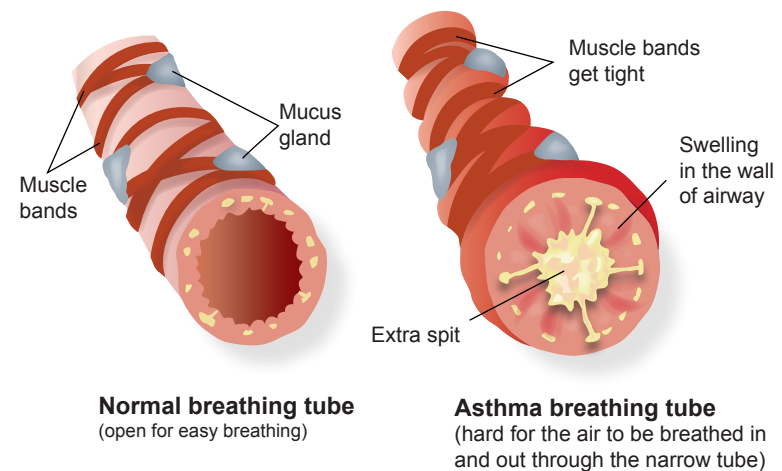
- The lungs look like an upside down tree.
- The tree trunk is like the windpipe (**trachea**).
- The 2 big branches are like the 2 main air tubes (**bronchi**).
- The smaller branches are like the smaller air tubes (**bronchioles**).
- The leaves are like the tiny air sacs (**alveoli**).

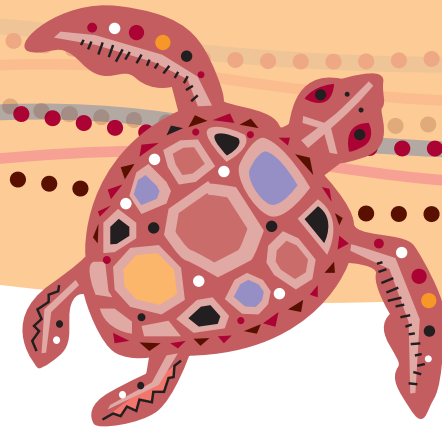


# What is asthma/short wind?

Asthma is when the breathing tubes in the lungs are sick and it is hard for air to be moved in and out.

- In Asthma
  - swelling of the small breathing tubes (bronchioles) in the lung.
  - muscles around the small air tubes get tight.
  - extra phlegm/spit/goonbee is produced inside the air tubes.





## What causes asthma?

- No-one knows what causes a child to start having asthma.
- Asthma tends to be in families with allergies.
- Asthma tends to be in children who are exposed to smoke.



# What happens with asthma?

Your child might have only one of these things or he/she may have all... everyone is different.



- Lots of coughing and hard to talk



- Short wind and become tired easily
- Wheezing or whistle sound when breathing



- Feeling tight in chest and/or hard to breathe

# Triggers for asthma in children



Colds and chest infections

Animal hair  
(dogs and cats)



Some fever medications



Dust mites in bedding  
(too tiny to see)



Pollens from tree and plant flowers



Cigarette smoke. (even on clothes, skin and hair of other people), bush fire and campfire smoke



Cold night air or weather changes

# How do we treat asthma?

- Take child to clinic or doctor.
- The doctor will write an Asthma Action Plan.
- The plan helps you to know what to do every day and when your child's asthma is worse.
- The doctor may give medication for your child's asthma.



## ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

Take this ASTHMA ACTION PLAN with you when you visit your doctor

NAME _____	DOCTOR'S CONTACT DETAILS	EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS
DATE _____		Name _____
NEXT ASTHMA CHECK-UP DUE _____		Phone _____
		Relationship _____

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**WHEN WELL** *Asthma under control (almost no symptoms)* ALWAYS CARRY YOUR RELIEVER WITH YOU

**Your preventer is:** \_\_\_\_\_ (NAME & STRENGTH)

Take \_\_\_\_\_ puffs/tablets \_\_\_\_\_ times every day

Use a spacer with your inhaler

**Your reliever is:** \_\_\_\_\_ (NAME)

Take \_\_\_\_\_ puffs \_\_\_\_\_

When: You have symptoms like wheezing, coughing or shortness of breath

Use a spacer with your inhaler

**OTHER INSTRUCTIONS** Peak flow\* (if used) below:

(e.g. other medicines, trigger avoidance, what to do before exercise)

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**WHEN NOT WELL** *Asthma getting worse (needing more reliever than usual, having more symptoms than usual, waking up with asthma, asthma is interfering with usual activities)*

**Keep taking preventer:** \_\_\_\_\_ (NAME & STRENGTH)

Take \_\_\_\_\_ puffs/tablets \_\_\_\_\_ times every day

Use a spacer with your inhaler

**Your reliever is:** \_\_\_\_\_ (NAME)

Take \_\_\_\_\_ puffs \_\_\_\_\_

Use a spacer with your inhaler

**OTHER INSTRUCTIONS** Peak flow\* (if used) between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

(e.g. other medicines, when to stop taking extra medicine)  Contact your doctor

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**IF SYMPTOMS GET WORSE** *Severe asthma flare-up/attack (needing reliever again within 2 hours, increasing difficulty breathing, waking others at night with asthma symptoms)*

**Keep taking preventer:** \_\_\_\_\_ (NAME & STRENGTH)

Take \_\_\_\_\_ puffs/tablets \_\_\_\_\_ times every day

Use a spacer with your inhaler

**Your reliever is:** \_\_\_\_\_ (NAME)

Take \_\_\_\_\_ puffs \_\_\_\_\_

Use a spacer with your inhaler

**OTHER INSTRUCTIONS** Peak flow\* (if used) below \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

(e.g. other medicines, when to stop taking extra medicine)  Contact your doctor today

Take \_\_\_\_\_ each morning for \_\_\_\_\_ days

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**ANGER SIGNS** *Asthma emergency (severe breathing problems, symptoms get worse very quickly, reliever has little or no effect)*

**DIAL 000 FOR AMBULANCE** Peak flow\* (if used) below \_\_\_\_\_

Call an ambulance immediately  
Say that this is an asthma emergency  
Keep taking reliever as often as needed  
 Use your adrenaline autoinjector (EpiPen or Anapen)

\*Peak flow is not recommended for children under 12 years

National Asthma Council Australia  
nationalasthma.org.au



# How does asthma medicine work?



## Relievers e.g. Ventolin

- Work fast
- Help child's short wind, cough, wheeze
- Always carry blue puffer and spacer with you

## Preventers e.g. Flixotide and Alvesco

- Make airways less sensitive
- Reduce breathing tube swelling
- Take every day when well (rinse, gargle and spit after taken)
- Helps prevent short wind attacks

## Combination medications e.g. Seretide and symbicort rapihaler

- Make airways less sensitive
- Reduce breathing tube swelling
- Dry up thick spit
- Take everyday (rinse, gargle and spit after taking)
- Helps prevent short wind attack long time
- Used for very bad asthma

# How to use puffers with a spacer and mask

Asthma puffer medicine is best taken using a spacer (and mask for small children) to get more medicine into the lungs.

1. Remove the cap from the puffer.
2. Shake puffer well and put it into the hole at the end of the spacer.
3. Put the mask on the mouthpiece of the spacer and place over the child's mouth and nose so there are no gaps.
4. Hold the puffer upright.



## How to use puffers with a spacer and mask (usually no mask if over 3 years old)

5. Press down on the puffer once to spray medication into the spacer.
6. Let the child breath in and out 4 times.
7. For more puffs, take out the puffer and shake then re-attach to spacer.
8. Repeat from step 3 for more puffs.



# When should you take your child to the doctor/clinic?

## When your child:

- Has lots of short wind, wheezing or coughing or finds it hard to exercise.
- Wakes at night with short wind and wheezing.
- Needs the blue reliever puffer more than 3 times in 1 week (except for play & sport).
- Misses a lot of school because of asthma.

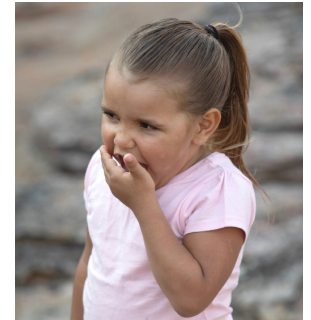


# How bad is your child's asthma?

## Feel Good



- No need to use **blue** reliever puffer more than 3 times a week (except for exercise)
- Not waking up coughing or wheezing



## Feel a little short of wind



### Go to clinic for check up

- Hard to breathe
- Bit more spit
- Lots of coughing with or without spit
- More **blue** reliever puffer to help short wind
- Quiet wheeze, a little bit hard to talk

## Bad short wind



### CALL AMBULANCE 000 – GO TO HOSPITAL

- Very hard to breathe and talk
- Lot more coughing, maybe with lots of spit
- Lot more **blue** reliever puffer for short wind
- Blue lips, sucking in at neck & chest
- Loud wheeze
- May need to stay in hospital
- May have to take prednisone medicine
- If there is a chest infection with the asthma, antibiotics may be prescribed

# What to do for an Asthma emergency (bad short wind)

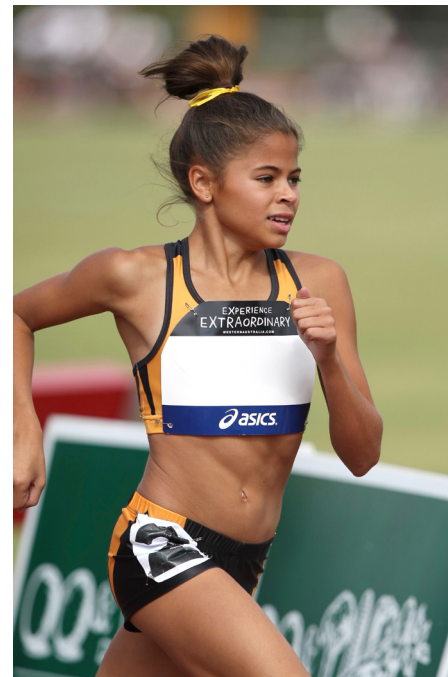
## Use blue puffer, spacer and mask

1. Sit the child upright (hold a baby in sitting position).
  2. Give **blue** reliever puffer, through spacer (with mask in young children):
    - shake the blue puffer and put in spacer.
    - give 4 separate puffs into the spacer (shake puffer before each puff).
    - get child to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff.
  3. Wait 4 minutes
    - if there is no improvement repeat step 2 and wait another 4 minutes.
  4. If there is still no improvement, call 000 or send someone to the clinic to get help:
    - say it's an asthma attack.
    - keep giving 4 puffs every 4 minutes while waiting for ambulance.
- If a child's asthma suddenly gets worse at anytime, call 000.



## Keeping your child's lungs healthy

- See your Health Worker for information and check ups and for your puffer medicines before they run out.
- Give your child his/her preventer puffer every day as ordered by the doctor.
- Your child should use the blue reliever puffer and spacer when they start to get short wind.
- Keep up to date with vaccinations e.g. flu needle.
- Breast feed your baby.



# Don't let asthma control your child's life

Asthma can affect anyone in the community at any age. Have a yarn with your local Health Worker.

Follow your child's Asthma Action Plan (short wind plan) every day and especially if they start to become sick with their short wind.

Use asthma medicine as advised by the doctor.

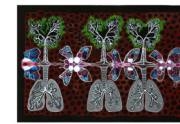




This information book was developed in consultation with Telethon Kids Institute, Telethon Kids Kimberley, the Child and Adolescent Health Service, Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service, Broome Aboriginal Medical Service, Western Australian Country Health Service and the Broome Aboriginal community, including St Mary's College (Primary), Broome.



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**KIMBERLEY**

To order more resources or provide feedback please email: [Pam.Laird@telethonkids.org.au](mailto:Pam.Laird@telethonkids.org.au)

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