

WHEN YOUR CHILD HAS AN ASTHMA EMERGENCY

It is important to follow your child's treatment plan and know when to seek emergency care.

Your child should always have their medicine available, including at school, during activities or sporting events, and while traveling.

Early Signs of an Asthma Episode

Early warning signs of respiratory distress can include:

- Exposure to a known trigger
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Trouble breathing during physical activity
- Coughing
- Tightness in chest



When some or all of these symptoms occur, your child should take their quick-relief medication. Stay with your child until symptoms get better.

Signs of an Asthma Emergency

- Constant wheezing
- Breathing is hard and fast
- Nostrils are wide open (called flaring)
- The areas below the ribs, between the ribs, and in the neck visibly pull in during inhalation (called retractions)
- Cough that does not respond to inhaled quick-relief medicine
- Changes in your child's color, like gray or bluish lips and fingernails
- Trouble talking and can't speak in full sentences
- Uses quick-relief medicine repeatedly for severe symptoms that do not go away after 15–20 minutes or return again quickly

When your child is having any of the above signs of an asthma emergency, they should immediately use their quick-relief medicine and then you or they call 911.

Keep a copy of your child's Asthma Action Plan nearby so that you can take it with you to the emergency department so medical staff are aware of your child's asthma medications.

Once your child is discharged, it is important that you communicate with their healthcare provider.