

ASTHMA

There are nearly 6 million people in the UK with asthma. Although management and treatment of asthma is very good, we should not forget that it is a life threatening condition. **Over 1,500 people die in the UK of asthma each year.**

POSSIBLE SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Wheezy breathing (especially when breathing out)
- Shortness of breath
- Exhaustion
- Coughing
- Tightness in the chest
- Distressed and anxious
- Difficulty in talking
- Signs and symptoms of hypoxia (low oxygen)

WHAT TO DO

- Get the casualty sitting upright. If they are weak, they could lean onto something, but do not allow them to 'curl up' or lay down.
- Reassure the casualty to relieve anxiety but do not encourage them to talk back.
- Keep the casualty in the environment they are in (unless in danger or it is making breathing worse). Moving the casualty to an environment with a different temperature (such as outside or an air conditioned room) may make breathing more difficult.
- Get the casualty to take their medication as instructed. Asthmatics should carry a blue reliever inhaler (other colours are usually preventer inhalers). They should be able to take this themselves, but the first aider can assist them if needed, especially if weak or exhausted.
- They may use a spacer or chamber to make the medication more effective.
- Usually they would take a puff every 30 - 60 seconds, up to a maximum of 10 puffs.
- Be prepared to use your emergency plan
- Call 999 if the casualty does not improve after taking their inhaler, or you are unsure or worried.



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