



Educating parents and children to manage asthma

See also



Selecting inhalers for children 6–11 years



Definition of exacerbations



Recommendation

Provide parents and carers with information about asthma symptoms and signs, asthma medicines, and how to take inhaled medicines correctly.

Sources & rationale

Recommendation type: Consensus recommendation

Resources

Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne's [What is asthma?](#) videos for parents, explaining how to identify wheeze and other signs, and how to correctly use a pMDI with spacer.



Recommendation

Prepare a personalised written asthma action plan for each child.

A written asthma action plan should include:

- a list of the child's usual medicines (names of medicines, doses, when to take each dose) – including treatment for related conditions, such as allergic rhinitis
- clear instructions on what to do in all the following situations:
 - when asthma is getting worse (e.g. when needing more reliever than usual, waking up with asthma, more symptoms than usual, asthma is interfering with usual activities)
 - when asthma symptoms get substantially worse (e.g. when needing reliever again within 3 hours, experiencing increasing difficulty breathing, waking often at night with asthma symptoms)
 - during an asthma emergency.
- instructions on when and how to get medical care (including contact telephone numbers)
- the name and contact details of the child's emergency contact person (e.g. parent)
- the name of the person writing the action plan, and the date it was issued.

Sources & rationale

Recommendation type: *Consensus recommendation*

Resources

[Library of asthma action plan templates](#)



Recommendation

Review the child's written asthma action plan at least yearly and whenever asthma control status changes significantly or medicines are changed or stopped.

Sources & rationale

Recommendation type: Consensus recommendation



Recommendation

Provide training for children and parents on how to use inhaler devices correctly, including inhaler technique and the care and cleaning of devices and spacers. Review technique each time asthma medicines are dispensed or prescribed.

Sources & rationale

Recommendation type: Consensus recommendation



Consideration

For parents who do not use English, provide a translated written asthma action plan.

Sources & rationale

Recommendation type: Consensus recommendation

Resources

National Asthma Council Australia's library of [asthma action plan templates in community languages](#)



Practice point

Do not include parent-initiated oral corticosteroids in asthma action plans for children.



Practice point

Supply a single course of oral prednisolone/prednisone only in regions where there are significant delays to acute care.



Practice point

Advise rinsing and spitting after taking inhaled medicines to minimise oropharyngeal deposition and reduce the risk of oropharyngeal candidiasis ('thrush') with inhaled corticosteroids, and possibly reduce the risk of dental caries with inhaled beta2 agonists.