



Complementary and lifestyle approaches for managing asthma in children

Read first



Initial asthma treatment for children 6-11 years after diagnosis



Educating parents and children to manage asthma



Recommendation

Recommend regular physical activity for children with asthma for its general health benefits.

Advise parents asthma does not prevent children participating in physical activity, including exercise training.

Reassure parents that exercise-induced bronchoconstriction can be managed effectively and should not be a reason for children to avoid physical activity.

Sources & rationale

Recommendation type: Consensus recommendation

Exercise interventions have not been shown to improve asthma control or reduce exacerbations in children, but may improve cardiopulmonary fitness, reduce exercise-induced bronchoconstriction, and improve peak expiratory flow.

[\[Wanrooij 2014\]](#)

Swimming training is well tolerated in children with stable asthma, and increases lung function (moderate-strength evidence) and cardiopulmonary fitness (high-strength evidence). [\[Beggs 2013\]](#)

References

Beggs S, Foong YC, Le HC, et al. Swimming training for asthma in children and adolescents aged 18 years and under. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2013; 4: CD009607.

Wanrooij VH, Willeboordse M, Dompeling E, et al. Exercise training in children with asthma: a systematic review. *Br J Sports Med* 2014; 48: 1024-1031.

Notes

Provide advice about prevention of breakthrough exercise-induced bronchoconstriction with warm-up before exercise, and taking reliever before exercise (low-dose ICS-formoterol or SABA).

For children involved in competitive sport, check which asthma medicines are permitted in the sport before prescribing.



Recommendation

For overweight or obese children with asthma, advise and support weight loss.

Sources & rationale

Recommendation type: Consensus recommendation

In Australia the prevalence of overweight and obesity among children with asthma is higher than the rate of childhood obesity in the general population.[\[McLoughlin 2021\]](#)

Available evidence suggests that weight loss in obese children with asthma is associated with improvements in asthma-related quality of life and asthma control.[\[Okoniewski 2019\]](#) Improvements in lung function have not been demonstrated.[\[Okoniewski 2019\]](#)

Most weight-loss interventions trialled in children include dietary changes, with or without exercise.[\[Okoniewski 2019\]](#)

References

Okoniewski W, Lu KD, Forno E. Weight loss for children and adults with obesity and asthma. A systematic review of randomized controlled trials. *Ann Am Thorac Soc* 2019; 16: 613-625.

Notes

More information on [asthma and obesity](#)



Practice point

Advise parents that a healthy diet (plenty of fruits and vegetables) may help control asthma symptoms.