

## **Children's Emergency Department (ChED)**

### **Discharge Information Leaflet for Children with Wheeze**

Your child has been seen in the Emergency Department and the clinician has assessed that your child may be safely treated at home for their wheeze.

This leaflet is to advise you about how to manage your child's breathing and to help you decide where and when to get further advice or assessment if needed.

#### **How long will my child take to get better?**

Wheezy episodes can usually take 5-7 days to fully resolve. Inhalers will only help with the breathing difficulty. Symptoms like cough and runny nose can't be treated and may continue for much longer.

#### **How do I help my child's breathing?**

The most important treatment is the blue (salbutamol) inhaler. If you have been told that your child has a viral wheeze this is the only treatment that they are likely to need. If your child has asthma you should continue to give your child their preventer inhaler and may also have been given steroid medicine.

The blue inhaler should be given every four hours. If you feel that they are getting worse then it is safe to give the inhaler up to an hour sooner, but you might need to get your child reassessed. (see "When should I worry?")

The inhaler should always be given through a spacer device. You should have been shown how to use this correctly. If the spacer has a mask this will only work if the mask is applied firmly to the child's face covering their mouth and nose.

When the spacer is applied correctly you will be able to see or hear a valve moving back and forth when the child breathes. Shake the inhaler and you should feel liquid moving inside it. Put it in the spacer and press the button down fully to give a puff. Allow ten movements of the valve as your child breathes and then take the inhaler out to give it another shake before giving the next puff. (See video using QR Code)



This chart tells you how many puffs of the blue inhaler to give each day:

First 24 hours	10 puffs every 4 hours
Second 24 hours	8 puffs every 4 hours
Third 24 hours	6 puffs every 4 hours
After the first 3 days	4 puffs every 4 hours as needed

If your child is completely better. You can stop using the blue inhaler sooner.

At any point, if your child gets worse when you reduce the number of puffs, go back to giving 10 puffs and seek medical advice.

If your child is asthmatic, you should make an appointment with your child's GP to be seen about 2 days after your hospital attendance. If your child has a viral wheeze, then it is still advisable to contact your GP to discuss having access to inhalers as it is likely that future colds will trigger another episode.

If there are any smokers living in the house this will make breathing problems worse. The presence of cigarette smoke on clothing or skin will affect a child's breathing

even if those smoking only do so outside. You should get advice about stopping smoking and can do that (via this QR Code)



### **When should I worry?**

Sometimes children with wheeze will get worse instead of slowly getting better. It is best to get medical advice or reassessment early when this happens.

You will be able to tell that breathing is getting worse by how fast the breathing is and by how much the skin is sucking in between or below their ribs.

If your child's breathing looks worse or they become less able to do things such as drinking or talking then you should do something.

- If your child's breathing gets a lot worse over a short period of time you should give 10 puffs of the blue inhaler and go to the nearest emergency department. If they look dangerously unwell call 999 and give 10 puffs every 15 minutes until an ambulance arrives.
- If you think that your child's breathing is not worse, but they are reluctant to drink then it is safe to give paracetamol or ibuprofen.
- If you think that your child's breathing is slowly getting worse then check that the inhaler has some liquid in it by giving a shake, that it is within the expiry date on the side of the canister, and that you are using it correctly as above.
- If breathing is getting worse despite this, then give an extra 10 puffs and seek further medical advice.

### **Where can I get help?**

NHS 111 website or phone advice service

- If you feel that you can manage your child's illness, but you want advice about something (Your local pharmacist may also be able to help)
- If you are unsure about whether your child needs to be seen or needs medical treatment

Your GP or the NHS walk in centre

- If you have been advised to go there by 111
- If you feel that your child needs a medical assessment soon and it is not an emergency

Go to your nearest Emergency Department or phone 999

- If your child has the significant features above
- If your instinct is that your child is dangerously unwell
- If you are advised to do so by 111 or your GP

We aim to provide the best care for every patient. So, we would like your feedback on the quality of the care you have received from the Hospital. Please visit:

<http://ratenhs.uk/IQu9vx> Or use QR:

