

OPTIONAL MODULE

Asthma Inhaler

Lesson Length: 30 minutes

GUIDANCE FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

To complete this lesson and meet the lesson objectives, you must:

- Conduct lectures for:
 - Understanding Asthma
 - Sign and Symptoms of an Asthma Attack
 - Understanding Asthma Medication
 - Care for a Severe Asthma Attack
- Show the video segment, “Asthma (Adult/Child/Infant)” (1:45).
- Optional: Conduct the Assisting with an Asthma Inhaler skill session.
- Conduct the Lesson Wrap-Up.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:
- Identify the sign and symptoms of asthma.
- Describe the care given to a person experiencing an asthma attack.
- Describe how to report the event of an asthma attack and your care to emergency medical services (EMS) personnel.
- Demonstrate the use of a meter-dosed inhaler.

MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- *Asthma training inhalers (one per participant)*
- *Latex Free Nitrile Gloves (multiple sizes)*
- *First Aid/CPR/AED DVD or course presentation supplement*



Instructor’s Note: *The Asthma Inhaler lesson is designed to be taught in approximately 30 minutes. The lesson can be presented as an add-on lesson to the Standard First Aid course or any other First Aid/CPR/AED course.*

The lesson was developed to address the need for training in the use of an inhaler device. The instructor should emphasize during the presentation of the lesson that:


- *This information is provided as general guidance only.*
- *In the event of differing advice, actual instructions or protocols from a health care provider for a specific person or situation should take precedence over instruction in this lesson.*

This lesson is not a substitute for current practices followed by personnel in settings such as


schools and camps. Examples of proactive steps include:

- *Obtaining health information about respiratory problems, along with instructions and permission to administer treatment.*
- *Following guidelines as determined by a health care provider.*
- *Checking medication(s) for expiration date.*
- *Knowing the plan of action for the setting in an emergency.*


UNDERSTANDING ASTHMA

<p>INSTRUCTION:</p>  <p>REFERENCE: PM, page 78</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Asthma is an illness in which certain substances or conditions, called “triggers,” cause inflammation and constriction of the airways (small tubes in the lungs through which we breathe), making breathing difficult. ■ Triggers of an asthma attack could include allergens or irritants such as tobacco smoke, air pollution, perfume, plants and molds, and animal fur or feathers. Other triggers include fear, intense exercise and extreme changes in the weather. ■ A trigger for one person is not necessarily a trigger for another. ■ People of any age can suffer an asthma attack at any time. ■ An asthma attack can become severe and life threatening.
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SIGN AND SYMPTOMS OF AN ASTHMA ATTACK




<p>INSTRUCTION:</p>  <p>REFERENCE: PM, page 80</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ You often can tell when a person is having an asthma attack by the hoarse, whistling sound made while breathing. ■ Other signals of an asthma attack include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Coughing.</i> <i>Wheezing.</i> <i>Trouble breathing or shortness of breath.</i> <i>Tightness in the chest.</i> <i>Sitting upright or leaning forward.</i> <i>Inability to talk without stopping for a breath.</i> <i>Sweating.</i> <i>Rapid, shallow breathing.</i> <i>Feelings of fear or confusion.</i>
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UNDERSTANDING ASTHMA MEDICATION

<p>INSTRUCTION:</p>  <p>REFERENCE: PM, pages 78-79</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ People who have been diagnosed with asthma are likely to have a personalized medication plan. They should take all medications exactly as prescribed by their health care provider. ■ Asthma medications come in two forms: long-term control and quick relief. ■ Long-term control medications prevent or reverse inflammation (swelling) in the airway. These medicines work slowly. They help to control asthma over the long term and should be taken every day whether or not signals of asthma are present. ■ Quick-relief—or rescue—medications are used to stop an asthma attack. These medications work quickly to relieve the sudden swelling. Quick-relief medications also are called short-acting bronchodilators.
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TOPIC: **CARE FOR A SEVERE ASTHMA ATTACK**

Time: 15 minutes

CARE FOR A SEVERE ASTHMA ATTACK	
<p>INSTRUCTION:</p>  <p>REFERENCE: PM, page 80</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ When someone is having trouble breathing, it is a life-threatening emergency. Assist the person with his or her prescribed quick-relief medication if requested and if permitted by state or local regulations. ■ Get the medication to them as soon as possible and call 9-1-1 if breathing does not improve after 5 to 15 minutes or worsens. ■ A metered-dose inhaler (MDI) is the most common way to deliver medication to a person having a sudden asthma attack. Different companies produce different styles of MDIs, but they all work in basically the same way. ■ Use only the medication prescribed for the person and only if the person is having a severe (acute) asthma attack. Some inhalers contain long-acting preventive medication that should not be used in an emergency. ■ Ensure that the prescription is in the person’s name and is a quick-relief medication prescribed for acute attacks. Ensure that the expiration date of the medication has not passed. Read and follow any instructions printed on the inhaler before administering the medication to the patient. ■ Once delivered, the medication can work quickly but may take as long as 5 to 15 minutes to reach full effectiveness.
ASTHMA INHALER	
<p>INSTRUCTION:</p>  <p>DVD or Presentation Slide D.6</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell participants that you are going to show them a video on asthma inhalers. 2. Show the video segment, “Asthma (Adult/Child/Infant)” (1:45), from the <i>First Aid/CPR/AED</i> DVD.
OPTIONAL: ASSISTING WITH AN ASTHMA INHALER SKILL SESSION	
<p>INSTRUCTION: Watch then Practice</p> <p>VISUAL AID:</p>  <p>DVD or Presentation Slide D.7</p> <p>REFERENCE: Skill Sheet 5-1</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask participants to find a partner. One person will be the responder while the other is the person in need of assistance with the asthma inhaler. 2. As a group, review the steps of using an inhaler. Ensure that participants do not make mouth contact with the training inhaler and only simulate pressing down on the device. 3. Have partners switch roles and repeat the skill.

<p>VISUAL AID: Presentation Slide D.8</p>	<p>1. What are some of the sign and symptoms of an asthma attack? Answers: Responses should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Coughing</i><i>Wheezing</i><i>Trouble breathing or shortness of breath</i><i>Tightness in the chest</i><i>Sitting upright or leaning forward</i><i>Inability to talk without stopping for a breath</i><i>Sweating</i><i>Rapid, shallow breathing</i><i>Feelings of fear or confusion</i> <p>1. What three things should you check before the person uses an inhaler? Answers: Responses should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>The medication is prescribed for that person.</i><i>The prescription is not outdated.</i><i>The prescription is prescribed as quick relief for acute attacks.</i> <p>2. When should you call 9-1-1? Answers: Responses should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Call 9-1-1 if breathing does not improve after 5-15 minutes or worsens since an asthma attack can become severe and life threatening.</i>
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TOPIC: SKILL CHART

OPTIONAL SKILL SESSION—ASTHMA INHALER

ASSISTING WITH AN ASTHMA INHALER

If the person has medication for asthma and requests you to help administer it, help him or her to take the medication:

1. Help the person to sit up and rest in a position comfortable for breathing.*
2. Ensure that the prescription is in the person's name and is prescribed as "quick relief" for "acute" attacks.
Ensure that the expiration date of the medication has not passed.
3. Shake the inhaler.
4. Remove the cover from the inhaler mouthpiece.
If an extension tube (spacer) is available, attach and use it.
5. Tell the person to breathe out as much as possible through the mouth.**
6. Have the person place his or her lips tightly around the mouthpiece and take in a long, slow breath.
As the person breathes in slowly, administer the medication by quickly pressing down on the inhaler canister only if the person is unable to self-administer the medication.
The person should continue a full, deep breath.
Tell the person to try to hold his or her breath for a count of 10.
When using an extension tube (spacer) have the person take 5 to 6 deep breaths through the tube without holding his or her breath.
7. Note the time of administration and any change in the person's condition.
The medication may be repeated once after 1 to 2 minutes.
Stay with the person and monitor his or her condition and give care for any other conditions.
8. Keep the person from getting chilled or overheated.
Have the person rest comfortably and provide reassurance.
Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number if trouble breathing does not improve quickly.***

**Always obtain consent and wash your hands immediately after giving care. Read and follow all instructions printed on the inhaler before administering the medication to the person.*

***The person may use different techniques, such as holding the inhaler two finger widths away from the mouth.*

**** These medications might take 5 to 15 minutes to reach full effectiveness. Follow label instructions regarding additional doses of the medication.*