

# Going home from the Emergency Department on AIR or MART after an asthma attack

Information for young people and their parents/carers

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## AIR and MART

You are currently using a single inhaler to manage your asthma. This inhaler contains the medicines **budesonide** (this is an inhaled steroid to treat redness or inflammation in your breathing tubes) and **formoterol** (which is a rapid and long acting reliever for your symptoms). This inhaler is a dry powder device and is called either Symbicort® or Fobumix®.

Some young people, who rarely experience asthma symptoms, will use Symbicort® **AIR** (Anti-Inflammatory Reliever). This should only be used when you have cough, wheeze, difficulty breathing or chest tightness (asthma symptoms).

Other young people will use a different approach with the single inhaler called **MART** (Maintenance and Reliever Therapy). This should be used either once or twice a day, and an extra dose if you are having asthma symptoms. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will have explained which plan you are to follow.

This leaflet explains how you can manage your asthma after you have been to the Emergency Department with an asthma attack. If the staff in the Emergency Department are unable to check your inhaler to ensure you have enough supplies that are in date, for safety reasons you will be sent home with a salbutamol inhaler and spacer.

## On the day you are discharged from the Emergency Department

Once your doctor or nurse is happy that your breathing is getting better after your asthma attack, it is time to go home. You should continue to use your inhaler as set out in your asthma plan. You may have used a salbutamol inhaler and spacer in the Emergency Department, but you do not need this at home, you should only need your single inhaler.

## Days after the attack

Although you should be recovering well from your visit to the Emergency Department, you may still have an occasional cough or a slight wheeze.

- You should use 1 puff of your inhaler as needed
- You can have a maximum of 8 doses in total in a day
- You do not need to use your inhaler regularly unless you feel you need it
- You can return to normal activities (e.g. school/clubs) when you feel you are well enough
- Your GP will receive information about your attendance at the Emergency Department. All young people who have had an asthma attack should have a post attack review, usually within 2 working days, with a member of the team at your GP surgery. Your surgery may decide this should be with a GP, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Practice Nurse or Pharmacist. You or your parent/carer will need to arrange this. You may need to change treatment from AIR to MART to help recover after this attack, so it is important to attend for this review even if you feel better.

For advice on how to manage asthma attacks please follow the plan below.  
You will be aware of which pathway to follow - either AIR or MART.

Symptoms	Anti-inflammatory Reliever (AIR)	Mart and Reliever Therapy (MART)
No symptoms	No treatment	Use your normal dose once or twice a day as per your asthma plan
Getting a cold/contact with a trigger	Start using your single inhaler – 1 dose, if no relief it can be repeated after 1-3 minutes. Maximum of 8 doses in 24 hours	Start using your single inhaler - 1 dose, if no relief it can be repeated after 1-3 minutes. Maximum of 8 doses in 24 hours including your once or twice daily dose
You are coughing, feeling tight in your chest, wheezing or very breathless. You will be breathing faster and making more effort with your breathing. You may be finding it difficult to talk, eat and drink or lie down to sleep. You and/ or your parent/carer are worried about your breathing.  If you use a peak flow meter it may be around 50% of your best reading.	Make sure your parent/carer know that you are struggling with your breathing.  <b>EMERGENCY DOSE:</b> Start using your single inhaler. Take 1 puff → Wait 1-3 minutes → no improvement → take 1 puff. Repeat up to a maximum of 6 times in a row.  If no improvement you <b>must</b> get <b>urgent medical advice</b> whether it's day or night.	Make sure your parent/carer know you are struggling with your breathing.  <b>EMERGENCY DOSE:</b> Start using your single inhaler. Take 1 puff → Wait 1-3 minutes → no improvement → take 1 puff. Repeat up to a maximum of 6 times in a row.  If no improvement you <b>must</b> get <b>urgent medical advice</b> whether it's day or night.

**If you do not get better after the EMERGENCY DOSE above, can only speak single words or cannot talk, are gasping for breath or have colour change you need urgent help –**

**YOU MUST PHONE 999 FOR AN AMBULANCE.**

While you are waiting for help to arrive, continue to use your single inhaler every 3 minutes. Tell the Ambulance call handler if this is too difficult.

**Remember: if you or your parent/carer are worried about your breathing, get medical advice straight away**

### Contact details

Your GP surgery:	NHS 24: 111
Hospital:	

Useful websites: Asthma + Lung UK - [www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk)

