Asthma emergency

IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000) FOR AN AMBULANCE.

DRSABCD Danger ► Response ► Send for help ► Airway ► Breathing ► CPR ► Defibrillation
The DRSABCD Action Plan is the first step when providing first aid. Use this to assess the immediate situation.

WARNING
An asthma emergency is potentially life-threatening.
Most people who suffer asthma attacks are aware of their asthma and should have an action plan and medication. They may wear a medical alert device.
In an emergency, or if a patient does not have their own reliever, use another person’s reliever (where permitted under local state or territory regulations), or one from a first aid kit.
If the patient is having difficulty breathing but has not previously had an asthma attack, follow WHAT TO DO.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS
MILD TO MODERATE ASTHMA ATTACK
• increasingly soft to loud wheeze
• persistent cough
• minor to obvious difficulty breathing

ASTHMA EMERGENCY
• symptoms get worse very quickly
• little or no relief from inhaler
• severe shortness of breath, focused only on breathing
• unable to speak normally
• pallor, sweating
• progressively more anxious, subdued or panicky
• blue lips, face, earlobes, fingernails
• loss of consciousness

WHAT TO DO
1. Follow DRSABCD.
2. Help the patient to sit down in a comfortable position.
3. Reassure and stay with the patient.
4. If requested, help the patient to follow their action plan.

HOW TO GIVE MEDICATION (4 : 4 : 4)
Use a spacer if available.
1. Give 4 separate puffs of blue/grey reliever puffer:
   • shake the inhaler
   • give 1 puff
   • take 4 breaths
   • repeat until 4 puffs have been given.
2. Wait 4 minutes
3. If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above.
4. If the patient still cannot breath normally, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.
5. Keep giving 4 puffs every 4 minutes (as above) until medical aid arrives.