

## DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE AN ASTHMA ACTION PLAN?

Every student with Asthma should have a written “Asthma Action Plan”. This is important for the school in caring for your child because it provides up-to-date, detailed information on how to manage your child’s asthma. This plan should:

- Be completed by the student’s parent/guardian in consultation with the student’s doctor;
- Outline how to care for day-to-day asthma (listing normal medications that have been prescribed and how often they should be taken);
- List key symptoms or special features that indicate the student’s asthma could be worsening or an “attack” is developing and the steps that should be taken to manage asthma;
- List symptoms that are serious enough to need urgent medical assistance (ie. Ambulance);
- List the Asthma First Aid procedure for an asthma “attack”;
- List the name and contact number of the parent/ guardian, emergency contact and student’s doctor; and
- Be easily accessible for all school staff. Be updated annually or when a student’s asthma changes significantly;

If an Asthma Action Plan is not provided, school staff will follow the Victorian Schools’ Asthma Policy for Asthma First Aid, which is a standard first aid protocol.

## BEING ACTIVE WITH ASTHMA

Being active is vital for your health and wellbeing. Sometimes, however, the physical exertion of exercise or physical activity can trigger a bout of asthma. This is called ‘exercise induced asthma’ (EIA). This kind of asthma is usually easily managed and should be a part of any Asthma Action Plan.

Some of the symptoms of exercise-induced asthma include:

Shortness of breath, wheezing, chest tightness, persistent cough.

These symptoms can occur during, or more commonly, after exercise. It is the type of exercise, the amount of time spent exercising and the intensity of exercise that is important. Typically, vigorous activity for six minutes or more in cold, dry air is more likely to trigger asthma. Also consider the environment you are exercising in as you may be exposed to a number of asthma triggers. You can reduce the risk or prevent exercise-induced asthma by preparing for physical activity in a few simple ways:

- Make sure your day-to-day asthma is well managed;
- Use your blue reliever medication around five to ten minutes before you warm up. Speak to your doctor about this;
- Always warm up with light exercise and stretching 10 – 15 minutes before you play sport or exercise; and
- Always cool down.

## THUNDERSTORM ASTHMA

Thunderstorm asthma is a form of asthma that is triggered by an uncommon combination of high pollen (usually during late Spring to early Summer) and a certain kind of thunderstorm. Anyone can be affected, even if they don’t have a history of asthma.



People at increased risk have a history of asthma, have unrecognised asthma, have hay fever (allergic rhinitis), particularly seasonal hay fever, or are allergic to grass pollen. People experiencing asthma symptoms even if for the first time should not ignore it and should seek medical advice as soon as possible. An asthma flare up can vary in severity and can be life threatening. If there are signs that a person’s condition is deteriorating, urgent care should be sought. Call Triple Zero (000).

Schools should be aware of forecast thunderstorms in the pollen season particularly on days with a HIGH or EXTREME pollen count. Where possible, students should stay indoors with doors and windows closed until the storm front has passed.

More information on thunderstorm asthma as well as forecast pollen across Australia through a number of participating universities and partners can be accessed on the Asthma Australia website at [asthma.org.au/about-asthma/triggers/thunderstorm-asthma/](http://asthma.org.au/about-asthma/triggers/thunderstorm-asthma/)