

# Breathing Problems/Asthma

## What is it?

Mild or severe blockage of the air passages for many different reasons.

One possible cause for breathing problems is asthma, a disease of the air passages. One possible cause of breathing problems is asthma, a disease of the air passages. A person who is having an asthma attack will have trouble breathing.

Someone experiencing a heart attack, stroke, or certain injuries may also have breathing problems. Your actions in the first few minutes after you see the signs of any of these conditions could help save a life.

## Signs/Symptoms:

- Breathing very fast or very slowly
- Having trouble with every breath
- Noisy breathing - you hear a sound or whistle as the air enters or leaves the lungs
- Can only make sounds or speak only a few words at a time between breaths

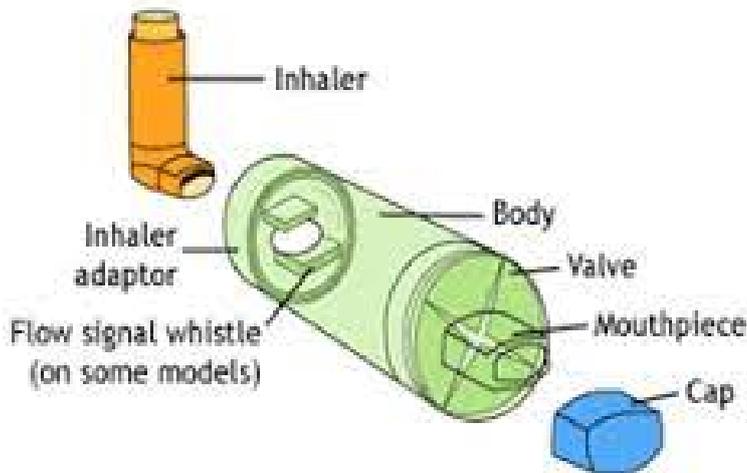
## Plan of Action:

Someone with a medical condition involving breathing problems, such as asthma, often carry an inhaler. The inhaler helps them breathe more easily within minutes of using it.

At times, a person can have such a hard time breathing that they need help getting and/or using their inhaler.

## Using an Inhaler:

Inhalers have a medicine canister (often albuterol), a mouthpiece, and sometimes a spacer. The spacer can be attached to make it easier and more effective for the person to inhale all the medicine.



- Remove the cap and shake well
- If they have a spacer, attach it to the mouth piece of the inhaler
- Have them exhale all the way
- Place the mouthpiece in their mouth and have them seal their lips around it
- Press down on the top of the inhaler one time
- Have them inhale as slowly and deeply as they can for about 5 seconds and hold for about 10 seconds to allow the medicine to reach the airways of the lungs
- Repeat for each puff indicated on the inhaler (generally 2 puffs total)

**Call 911 if the person has no medicine, does not get better or worsens, has trouble speaking, or becomes unresponsive.**