

Module 11

Asthma – Lesson 3: Asthma attacks



Learning Outcomes

Pupils will:

- understand how common asthma is and why it's important to know how to help someone during an asthma attack;
- learn to recognise when someone is having an asthma attack;
- be able to assess a casualty's condition calmly and give first aid and help to someone who is having an asthma attack; and
- know when and how to seek medical help for someone who is having an asthma attack.



Resources

- Lesson 3 presentation
- Resources 7 worksheet
- Resources 8 worksheet
- individual video clips (websites)
- whiteboards and markers (for bingo) or paper and pen



Teaching Notes

Introduction (10 minutes)

Game

Pupils review and apply prior knowledge about asthma and connect it to the real-world implications of asthma attacks, leading into the lesson.

Rules

Ask the class to stand up. Each time you read out a statement, your pupils must put their hands on their head, if they think it is true or fold their arm if they think it is false. Ask those who were incorrect to sit down. Discuss the correct answer with the class.

Game statements:

1. **One in ten children in the UK has asthma. (TRUE)**
Follow-up: If this room represents the UK population, how many pupils would that be?
2. **Asthma attacks are more likely on warm, sunny days. (FALSE)**
Follow-up: What weather conditions can trigger asthma attacks?
3. **1,500 people in the UK die each year from asthma attacks. (TRUE)**
Follow-up: This highlights why it's so important to know how to help during an attack.
4. **Asthma affects over 4 percent of the global population. (TRUE)**
Follow-up: That's more than 300 million people worldwide!
5. **Asthma is one of the leading causes of missed school days. (TRUE)**
Follow-up: How might this affect someone's education or social life?
6. **Asthma costs the NHS less than £100 million per year. (FALSE)**
Follow-up: It actually costs £889 million annually.
7. **Children whose parents smoke are 1.5 times more likely to have asthma. (TRUE)**
Follow-up: What other triggers can cause asthma or make it worse?

Module 11 Asthma – Lesson 3: Asthma attacks

8. **If someone is having an asthma attack, the first thing you should do is call 999. (FALSE)**

Follow-up: What do you think you should do first? We'll cover this today – by the end of the lesson you will know how to recognise an attack and give first aid or seek help when needed.

Development

Class discussion (5 minutes)

Use these **key questions** and the presentation to reinforce the learning.

- What is an asthma attack?
- What are the symptoms of an asthma attack?
- What could cause someone to have an asthma attack?
- What feelings might someone have when having an asthma attack?

How confident do you feel about helping someone who is having an asthma attack? Ask your pupils to select a number.

Video (5 minutes)

Show one of these St John ambulance videos to the class and then discuss the steps to help an asthmatic using the Lesson 3 presentation.

[Asthma animated](#) (2:07 mins)

[How to Treat an Asthma Attack](#) (3:01 mins)

Role Play (10 minutes)

Divide the class into groups and assign each member of a group one of these roles:

- **Person having the asthma attack:** The pupil pretends to have an asthma attack, demonstrating symptoms such as shortness of breath, coughing and wheezing. (They may decide to get worse, requiring an ambulance.)
- **Helper:** One or more pupils role play the person helping. They follow the steps outlined in the presentation, for example stay calm, encourage sitting up, offer inhaler, call for emergency help if needed.
- **Observer:** Pupils act as observers, taking notes on what went well and areas for improvement.

Encourage your pupils to switch roles so that each one has a chance to practice both helping and being the person having the attack.

After each role play, discuss with the class:

- What did the helpers do well?
- What could be improved?
- What was challenging about the role play?

This activity will give pupils hands-on experience in a safe, controlled way, reinforcing the correct response steps and boosting confidence when responding to an asthma emergency.

Worksheet (15 minutes)

Asthma Emergency Card with Mnemonic

Ask your pupils to complete the asthma emergency card – Resource 7 (lower ability) or 8 (higher ability).

Encourage your pupils to explain briefly what to do at each step of the process (A I R E) using the presentation to help. Ask them to draw icons for each step of the mnemonic (for example, a picture of an inhaler for the Inhaler step and a phone for Emergency Help) to make the card easy to understand visually.

Module 11 Asthma – Lesson 3: Asthma attacks

Asthma Bingo (10 minutes)

Ask your pupils to create Bingo Cards by drawing a 3 × 3 grid and entering 9 words from the presentation.

Read the clues below and encourage your pupils to find and mark the corresponding word on their card. Give a prize to the first pupil to get a row (horizontally, vertically or diagonally) and one for a full house (a complete grid).

Give the answers to consolidate and check and confirm the winner.

Bingo Clues and Answers

Clues	Answers
This inhaler is used daily to prevent symptoms.	brown
A machine that helps deliver inhaler medication in a spray for severe asthma	nebuliser
A sticky substance that builds up in airways	mucus
A pollution trigger caused by cigarettes	smoke
A sudden worsening of asthma symptoms	attack
Small airways in the lungs	bronchioles
Airway walls become larger due to irritation	swell
This inhaler is used during an attack to relieve symptoms.	blue
This helps you properly use your inhaler by making the medication easier to inhale	spacer
This is caused by allergies and irritants	inflammation
The windpipe that carries air to the lungs	trachea
A whistling sound when breathing, often heard in asthma	wheezing
A symptom of asthma, especially at night or early morning	coughing
Things that can cause an asthma attack	triggers
This type of air can cause an asthma attack	cold

Plenary (5 minutes)

Video: [What to Do if Someone is Having an Asthma Attack](#)

Ask your pupils: How confident do you feel about helping someone? Encourage them to choose a number that shows their level of confidence. Hopefully, it will be higher than the one they chose previously.

Reflect on the learning intentions with these exit questions:

- What does A I R E stand for?
- When should you call an ambulance?
- What are the symptoms of an asthma attack?
- What inhaler should be used?

Module 11 Asthma – Lesson 3: Asthma attacks

Resource Sheet 7: Asthma Emergency Card

AIRE

Assess

Check if the person is having an asthma attack by observing symptoms such as shortness of breath, _____ and _____ .

Ask do you have an _____ ?

Icon



Inhaler

If the person has an inhaler, help them to use it correctly. If it's a pressurised inhaler, _____ it first, then help them take a _____. Wait 30 seconds before giving another puff if necessary.

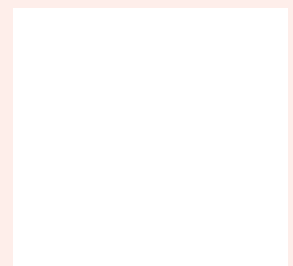
Icon



Reassure

Stay _____ and reassure the person to reduce anxiety. Encourage them to sit up _____ to help their breathing.

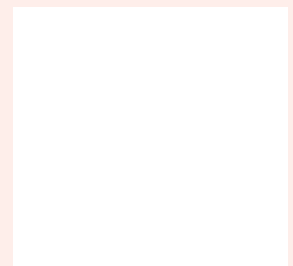
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Emergency Help


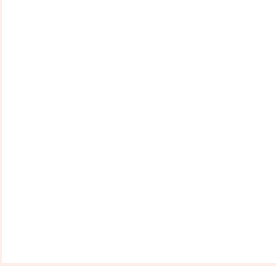

If symptoms worsen or do not improve, call _____ emergency medical help immediately. Provide clear details of the person's condition and the actions taken.

Icon



Module 11 Asthma – Lesson 3: Asthma attacks

Resource Sheet 8: Asthma Emergency Card

AIRE	
Assess	Icon
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Inhaler	Icon
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Reassure	Icon
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Emergency Help	Icon
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