

Asthma policy

Aims and objectives

We recognise the needs of children with asthma

- We require parents to give appropriate information to the nursery on their child's condition.
- We recognise that immediate access to the child's inhaler is vital.
- We will encourage and help children with asthma to participate fully in all aspects of nursery life.

In order to achieve the above:

- All children with asthma or who use an inhaler will have a completed care plan. These will be kept in the room where the child is cared for and one will be kept in their inhaler bag which will detail their inhaler needs and emergency contact details.

Trigger factors that may cause asthma

- Exercise
- Colds and viral infection
- Damp, cold air
- Sudden changes in temperature
- Stress/anxiety
- Pollens/spores/moulds
- Chemicals
- House and dust mites
- Dust and fumes
- Smoking(passive and active)

Treatment of asthma in nursery

Most children with asthma will use a combination of inhalers to keep their symptoms under control

Preventer: Usually brown/orange devices, they need to be used regularly to gain control of symptoms. They take up to 10 days to be effective and therefore are no benefit in the event of an attack for immediate relief of symptoms

Relievers: Usually in blue devices. These begin to work immediately and should last up to 4 hours. However if a child needs to use it more frequently they should be given it, but it is important to let parents/carers know. These inhalers are very important and should always be in nursery and immediately accessible for the child.

With children under the age of 10 the doctor should prescribe a spacer device to accompany the reliever.

Recognising an asthma attack

During an asthma attack a child may:

- Have a persistent cough, which does not settle
- Have noisy breathing (wheeze)
- Have difficulty breathing
- Have difficulty talking
- Complain of a tight chest
- Develop lips tinged blue

Treating an asthma attack

In any asthma attack the child should have immediate access to their reliever inhaler. Mild asthma attacks should not interrupt a child's participation in nursery activities. As soon as they feel better they can return to nursery activities.

In the event of an attack

- Stay calm
- Help the child to:
 - Breathe slowly
 - Sit upright
 - Loosen tight clothing
- Help the child to take their reliever inhaler
- If needed repeat inhaler as specified on the administering instructions given either by the parent or actually accompanying the inhaler.
- Stay with child until they are breathing normally
- Afterwards offer the child a drink to relieve mouth dryness
- If the child requires repeat medication within three hours allow them to do so but always notify parents/cares.
- Always inform parents/cares that a child has needed to use their reliever inhaler and ensure a medication administration form is completed and signed.

Call an ambulance if:

- The attack appears too serious to treat in the nursery or a child's condition is deteriorating quickly.
- There is no significant improvement in the child's condition 5 minutes after using their inhaler.
- The child is distressed and gasping for breath
- The child has difficulty speaking more than a few words at a time
- The child is showing signs of fatigue or exhaustion
- The child is pale, sweaty and blue around the lips
- The child is exhibiting a reduced level of consciousness
- There are any doubts about the child's condition.

Whilst waiting for ambulance to arrive

- The child should, where possible be given 10 individual puffs in a row from the blue inhaler through the spacer device.
- Ensure that the child's parent/carer is contacted.

Safety and storage of inhalers

- The drug for the relief of asthma (usually blue) is very safe. If too much of the relief is taken, the worst that will happen is that the child will feel very shaky; this will wear off after a short time.
- Inhalers will be kept in the room where the child is based and labelled with their name out of reach of the children but within easy reach for staff (Asthma bags by doors for easy access in the event of a fire)
- The procedures for authorisation and recording will be the same as with any other medication.

If children do not bring in their inhalers/medication we cannot allow them to stay at nursery. This would be unsafe due to there being no medication to treat their asthma in the event of an attack.

Please ensure your child's inhaler is always at nursery, one should be left at nursery permanently if not it needs to be brought in every day with the child and given to staff.

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