All about asthma
This book is about asthma

You can get asthma at any age.
Sometimes it starts when you are a child.
Sometimes it starts when you are an adult.
It is hard to say what causes asthma.

This book can help you look after your asthma.
What happens if you have asthma?

If you have asthma your **airways** don’t work as well.

- You cough a lot.
- You **wheeze**.
- It is hard to breathe.
- Your chest feels tight.

You might have all of these symptoms. You might only have some of them.

**Wheeze** – a noisy whistling sound in your chest when you breathe.
What can make your asthma worse?

Some things can make your asthma worse. Things that make your asthma worse are called triggers. Everyone has different triggers. Most people have more than one trigger.

Here are some triggers:
- pollen
- stress
- perfume
- changes in weather
- some animals
- colds
- pollution
- cigarette smoke
- mould and damp
Medicines that can help your asthma

Inhalers

There are two kinds of inhaler.
One is called a reliever.
One is called a preventer.

Inhalers can be different shapes.
They can be different colours.
Inhalers are sometimes called puffers or pumps.

You might have tablets for your asthma too.
Relievers
Reliever inhalers are usually blue. You take them when your asthma feels bad. They make it easier to breathe. Keep your blue inhaler with you all the time.

Preventers
Preventer inhalers can be different colours and shapes. You take them every day even if you feel well. They make your airways work better.

Spacer
Sometimes you use a spacer with your inhaler. A spacer is a plastic tube that helps you get the medicine into your lungs.
Asthma attack

Sometimes your asthma might get worse.

You are having an asthma attack if:
• you need to use your blue inhaler a lot
• your chest feels tight
• you are coughing and wheezing a lot
• you cannot breathe well
• it is hard to talk.
What to do if you are having an asthma attack

1. Sit up straight - don’t lie down. Try to stay calm.

2. Take one puff of your inhaler every minute until you feel better. You can take up to ten puffs of your blue inhaler.

3. If you don’t feel better after ten puffs of your blue inhaler, call 999 for help.

Will I have to go to hospital?

You might have to go to hospital.
Take your inhaler with you.

What to do after an asthma attack

Go and see your doctor the same day.
Your doctor will check if your asthma is OK.
You might need to see your doctor again soon.
This is to make sure your asthma is still OK.

Call 999 if you are worried at any time.
Going to the doctor about your asthma

Every year you should go to your doctor for an asthma review. This is a check up for your asthma.

Your doctor can help you look after your asthma at other times too.

Your doctor will:

- use a peak flow meter to check your breathing
- check you are using your inhaler properly
- see if your asthma is better or worse
- talk to you about looking after your asthma.

Peak flow meter – a tube you blow into. It tells the doctor how good your breathing is.
Being healthy is good for your asthma

Here are some things you can do to be healthy:

• eat healthy food
• do some exercise
• do things that make you feel happy and relaxed.
Exercise

Exercise is good for you.
There are lots of ways to keep fit.
Keep your blue inhaler with you when you exercise.

What if exercise makes your asthma worse?
Talk to your doctor before you start exercising.
For some people exercise is a trigger.
Start with gentle exercise like walking or yoga.

Yoga – gentle stretching where you put your body into different positions.
Stop smoking

Smoking is bad for you.
Smoking is bad for your asthma.
Someone smoking near you can make your asthma worse.

Talk to your doctor if you smoke.
Your doctor can help you to stop.
There are groups to support you.
Stopping smoking is good for your asthma.
These people have asthma

If you look after your asthma you can enjoy lots of different things.

Take your preventer inhaler every day to look after your asthma.
Your asthma

Put something about your own asthma here.

Other information to help you

Asthma attack card
What to do in an asthma attack

Signs of an asthma attack
- You need to take your blue inhaler a lot
- Your chest feels tight
- You are coughing and wheezing a lot
- You cannot breathe well
- It is hard to talk

This has been made by Asthma UK, a charity that helps people with asthma.

www.asthma.org.uk
0300 222 5800

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Inhaler card
Reminds you when to use your inhalers

My asthma inhalers

Every day – even if I am feeling well
When I need to
My preventer is the colour
My reliever is the colour
I take:
- puffs in the morning
- puffs at night
- puffs when my asthma gets bad

My doctor’s name is
My doctor’s telephone number is

Call 0300 222 5800 to get these for free or go to the website www.asthma.org.uk
Asthma UK is a charity.

We want to help people look after their asthma well.

If you have any questions about your asthma speak to your doctor or call our Helpline.

📞 0300 222 5800

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Thanks to these people who helped us from The Elfrida Society: Maz Bello, Colin Dulice, Savas Ibrahim, Vanessa Martin, Andrew Naylor, June Patterson, Pauline Robertson and Yvonne Swift. The Elfrida Society is a charity for adults with learning disabilities.