

# Asthma

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Asthma is a condition that affects the lungs, causing the airways to become inflamed and narrow. Symptoms include wheezing, coughing, tightness in the chest and feeling out of breath.

People with asthma can experience asthma attacks, which are sometimes called flares. Asthma attacks can be serious and require hospital treatment.

Although asthma is not an infectious disease, it is included in these guidelines because asthma attacks can be triggered by a respiratory viral infection, such as a cold or flu. Infection control practices reduce the risk of viral infection, and thus reduce the risk of an asthma attack.

## How it spreads

Asthma does not spread between people. It is not infectious.

## Exclusion period

Not excluded – people with asthma can attend the service.

## Actions for educators and other staff

Ensure that you have an up-to-date action plan for each child in your care who has asthma.

Reduce the risk of asthma being triggered by respiratory viruses by using appropriate cleaning practices and good hand hygiene, as described in the *Staying healthy* guidelines.

## Actions for parents and carers

If you think your child may have asthma, see a doctor for diagnosis and a treatment plan.

Give the service:

- a copy of the asthma action plan that your child's doctor has developed with you
- any medication your child needs.

## More information about asthma

See healthdirect for more information on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of asthma ([healthdirect.gov.au/asthma](http://healthdirect.gov.au/asthma)).

To find out if a child needs medical help, you can:

- use the online symptom checker ([healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker](http://healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker))
- speak to a registered nurse by calling the 24-hour health advice hotline on 1800 022 222.