



# Children Under 5 with Asthma Symptoms

## Is it Asthma?

Almost half of all young children under 5 will cough and wheeze at some time, usually with a cold or viral infection. Many will be prescribed inhalers but not all will develop asthma.

Asthma symptoms: cough, wheeze and a tight chest, are difficult to treat in children under 5 years. Their airways are tiny and giving inhalers is difficult.

## Which children are more likely to be diagnosed with asthma?

- CHILDREN WITH:
  - ECZEMA / FOOD ALLERGIES / FAMILY HISTORY OF ASTHMA or ALLERGIES
  - CHILDREN EXPOSED TO CIGARETTE SMOKE, *even before they are born*, are more likely to cough and wheeze and be admitted to hospital with breathing difficulties in the first 5 years.

*Be aware that cigarette smoke remains on your clothing and hair and can affect your child's breathing.*

  
**Open Airways**  
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## Triggers

The most common triggers in children under the age of 5 are colds and viral infections.

### Avoid Asthma triggers

- Do not allow smoking in your home or car.
- Do not use household sprays, aerosols or plug-in air fresheners.
- Do clean with microfibre cloths.
- Do not allow your child to have too many stuffed toys, place in freezer weekly for 6 hrs to kill the dust mites.
- Do not have pets in the bedroom.
- Do open windows every day.

## Treatment Options

- Quick reliever inhaler – Ventolin or Aiomir (Salbutamol) usually blue – 2 puffs for cough or wheeze as prescribed.  
**NEVER LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT!**
- If symptoms persist a preventer inhaler may be prescribed- Flixotide (Fluticasone) orange or Becotide (Beclomethasone) brown. Takes 10 to 14 days to be effective and should be taken on an ongoing basis even when well.
- Singulair (Montelukast) may be prescribed once daily from 6 months of age, given as sprinkles in applesauce or chewable tablets from age 2 years.
- Spacers – help the medication reach the small airways and should be used with all inhalers.

**See an asthma nurse to learn how to use spacers effectively.**

Encourage a healthy diet with plenty of fruits & vegetables and physical activity to help the lungs develop.

For further information contact:

## Open Airways

536-6060 or [nurse@openairways.com](mailto:nurse@openairways.com)  
[www.openairways.com](http://www.openairways.com)



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