

Fact sheet: Accessing medicines for management of asthma and anaphylaxis in the community

October 2019

Purpose

This fact sheet provides information on the purchase and use of emergency first aid medicines:

- Schedule 3 (S3) salbutamol and S3 terbutaline (blue/grey asthma reliever medicines);
- S3 adrenaline in a pre-loaded auto-injector (commonly known by the brand name EpiPen) for the treatment of anaphylaxis.

Background

In Queensland the *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 (HDPR)* regulates the supply and use of medicines to ensure that they are used safely and effectively. There are special provisions that allow greater access to emergency first aid medicines, however administration is limited to persons who have completed the relevant training.

Who may purchase and use these medications for emergency first aid?

Education and child care services

For education and child care services, the following people are authorised to **purchase** medicines for the management of asthma and anaphylaxis (S3 salbutamol, terbutaline and adrenaline auto-injector):

- a principal of an educational institute (or a person nominated by the principal);
- a Queensland approved provider of a Queensland approved education and care service (or a person appointed as a supervisor for the service under the *Education and Care Services Act 2013*);
- an approved provider of an education and care service under the *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland)* (or a person nominated as a supervisor by the approved provider).

For **administration** of these medicines:

- any person who has completed an [asthma management course approved by Queensland Health](#) is authorised to administer S3 salbutamol or terbutaline (blue/grey reliever medication) in the event of a suspected asthma emergency at a school, workplace or community event; and

- any person who has completed an anaphylaxis management course, and is authorised by the principal or supervisor, may administer an S3 adrenaline auto-injector for the emergency treatment of anaphylaxis.

Note: written consent of a parent or guardian is required to administer S2 or S3 medicines to a child at a Queensland approved education and care service or an education and care service.

First-aiders

For all other persons:

- a person who has completed an asthma management course approved by Queensland Health is authorised to purchase S3 salbutamol or terbutaline and use these medicines in asthma first aid at a workplace or community event e.g. sporting or recreational event;
- a person who has completed an anaphylaxis management course, and is authorised by an [approval issued by Queensland Health](#), may purchase and administer an S3 adrenaline auto-injector for the first aid management of anaphylaxis (subject to any conditions on the approval).

Conditions on the sale of emergency first aid medicines

Each of these medicines may be purchased over the counter from a pharmacy, however if the medicine is to be used for emergency first aid (i.e. not for a specific individual), a pharmacist *may* request evidence of a person's authority to purchase them.

Suitable evidence of a person's authority to purchase could include a letter from a child care centre or school nominating the person as an approved purchaser on behalf of the centre or school. Alternatively, a first aider may provide a certificate of completion from an approved asthma management course or a copy of their Queensland Health approval to use an adrenaline auto-injector.

Additional information for pharmacists

When purchased for emergency first aid, these medications do not require labelling or counselling on their use, however to sell an S3 (or S2) medicine, a pharmacist must have prepared or adopted a quality standard and comply with the quality standard.

Recommendations

- Persons administering medicines for the management of asthma should do so in accordance with the national asthma first aid procedure (see attachment).
- Separate asthma and anaphylaxis management plans should be in place where appropriate (e.g. in schools and child care facilities).

- Organisations should conduct a risk assessment to determine the required quantity and suitable locations of adrenaline auto-injectors and blue/grey reliever medication and spacers.
- Medication expiry dates should be checked regularly.
- Training should be completed at least every three years.

Further information

Enquiries related to training courses

For information on asthma training requirements see the [Approved Asthma Management Course fact sheet](#). The Australian Government website myskills.gov.au provides information on courses and providers. Please contact providers directly for more information.

For enquiries related to asthma first aid and/or asthma management, contact:
 Asthma Australia
Phone: 07 3252 7677
Fax: 07 3257 1080
Web: asthmaaustralia.org.au

For further information on anaphylaxis, see also:
conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/1/25/5/anaphylaxis

Enquiries related to medicines approvals under the HDPR

For first-aiders seeking more information on applying for an approval to obtain adrenaline, see the guideline: [Approvals to use scheduled medicines for emergency first aid](#).

Healthcare Approvals and Regulation Unit (HARU)

Tel: 07 3708 5264

Email: HARU@health.qld.gov.au

www: health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/licences/medicines-poisons/approvals-authorities

Asthma First Aid

1 Sit the person upright

- Be calm and reassuring
- Do not leave them alone



2 Give 4 separate puffs of blue/grey reliever puffer

- Shake puffer
- Put 1 puff into spacer
- Take 4 breaths from spacer

Repeat until 4 puffs have been taken

Remember: Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths

OR give 2 separate doses of a Bricanyl inhaler (age 6 & over) or a Symbicort inhaler (over 12)



3 Wait 4 minutes

- If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above

OR give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler



4 If there is still no improvement call emergency assistance - Dial Triple Zero (000)

- Say 'ambulance' and that someone is having an asthma attack
- Keep giving 4 separate puffs every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives

OR give 1 dose of a Bricanyl or Symbicort every 4 minutes - up to 3 more doses of Symbicort



Call emergency assistance immediately - Dial Triple Zero (000)

- If the person is not breathing
- If the person's asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- If the person is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- If you are not sure if it's asthma
- If the person is known to have Anaphylaxis - follow their Anaphylaxis Action Plan, then give Asthma First Aid

Blue/grey reliever medication is unlikely to harm, even if the person does not have asthma



Contact your local Asthma Foundation

1800 ASTHMA Helpline (1800 278 462) asthmaaustralia.org.au

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