



# factfile

## football and asthma



'I always make sure that I take my inhaler before playing football and that I have it available in case I need it.'

PAUL SCHOLES, FOOTBALLER

**1** in **10**  
children have  
asthma in the UK

### football and asthma factfile

#### **This factfile covers:**

- Top tips to manage your asthma while playing football
- What to do in an asthma attack
- Where can I get more information?

This factfile is for you to help you support children and young people with asthma to help them achieve their full potential. Many coaches and youth club organisers are concerned about working with children with asthma as they are worried about the effects of asthma medicines and the risk of an asthma attack. By following these simple steps you will enable any child with asthma to participate as much as they are able and give them the confidence that they are being looked after by an informed professional.

The main worry for children and young people with asthma playing football is the effect of cold air as this may cause the muscles around the airways to tighten, making breathing more difficult. To minimise the effect of cold air ensure that everyone is warmed up thoroughly and that they have taken their inhaler beforehand.

## Football & Asthma

### Top tips to manage your asthma while playing football

- If football makes a child's asthma worse always ensure that they use their reliever (blue) inhaler 5–10 minutes before they warm up.
- Always start your session with warm up exercises.
- Try to avoid the things that trigger their asthma (eg, smoke, pollen).
- Ensure that the child always has their reliever (blue) inhaler with them.
- If they have asthma symptoms when they are playing, ensure they stop, take their reliever inhaler and wait five minutes or until they feel better before starting again.
- If a child has to sit out for five minutes try to keep them involved as much as possible, for example by getting them to take notes on the match or training or getting them to do some ball work (if they are feeling well enough to do so).
- Always end your session with warm down exercises.
- Make sure you know which children have asthma.
- Ensure the children all have an asthma attack card with them. This is especially important while playing football and is a reminder for the child and those around them about what to do if they are experiencing severe asthma symptoms. Contact Asthma UK's Supporter & Information Team ([info@asthma.org.uk](mailto:info@asthma.org.uk); 020 7786 5000) to receive your free copy.

### What to do in an asthma attack

1. Give the child their reliever (blue) inhaler
2. Encourage the child to sit up and ensure that any tight clothing is loosened
3. If there is no immediate improvement during an attack, continue to give the child one puff of their reliever (blue) inhaler every minute for five minutes or until symptoms improve.

If their symptoms do not improve in five minutes – or if you are in doubt – call 999 or a doctor urgently. The child should continue to take one puff of reliever every minute until help arrives

If a child is having any problems during a football session always let their parents know, as they may need to visit their doctor or asthma nurse for an asthma review.





### **Asthma UK Adviceline**

Ask an asthma  
nurse specialist

**08457 01 02 03**

**asthma.org.uk/adviceline**

### **Asthma UK website**

Read the latest independent  
advice and news on asthma

**asthma.org.uk**

### **Asthma UK publications**

Request booklets, factfiles  
and other materials with  
independent, specialist  
information on every  
aspect of asthma

**020 7786 5000**

**info@asthma.org.uk**

### **Asthma UK membership**

Become a member of  
Asthma UK and receive  
*Asthma Magazine* four times  
a year

**020 7786 5000**

**membership@asthma.org.uk**

For further information or a poster on exercise and asthma contact;

Asthma UK, Summit House, 70 Wilson Street, London EC2A 2DB

**T** 020 7786 4900 **F** 020 7256 6075

Asthma UK Cymru, ADMAIL 3865, Cardiff CF1 8XS

**E** wales@asthma.org.uk

Asthma UK Northern Ireland, ADMAIL 3866, Belfast BT1 1TR

**E** ni@asthma.org.uk

Asthma UK Scotland, 4 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JE

**T** 0131 226 2544 **E** enquiries@asthma.org.uk