

# Viral induced wheeze

## Emergency Department Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

This leaflet is for the parent/carer of a child who has been assessed by a doctor or nurse practitioner after a viral induced wheeze episode. Your child has been assessed and is well enough to go home.

### What is a viral induced wheeze?

A wheeze is a high-pitched whistling sound that can be heard during breathing. It can be associated with increased difficulty in breathing. Breathlessness and wheezing can occur with a respiratory viral illness such as a common cold.

The wheezing episodes can last for two to four days but sometimes longer. Between colds, children do not usually have a wheeze even when exercising.

### How is a viral induced wheeze treated?

As soon as your child becomes wheezy or short of breath, they need to use their reliever inhaler. This is the blue salbutamol inhaler that you have been given. This reliever relaxes the muscle surrounding the airway, making it easier to breathe.

## Using a spacer

All inhalers must be given using a spacer as this is the most effective way of giving the medication (see figures 1a and 1b). A spacer is a plastic device that helps the medicine get into the lungs where it is needed. When used correctly, inhalers are just as effective as the nebulised solution that the hospital may have used.

The nurses will have shown you how to use a spacer. Please ask if you have any more questions about using the device before you go home.



Figure 1a shows a spacer being used



Figure 1b shows an inhaler being used without a spacer

When using the spacer device with an inhaler, please remember to get a good seal around the mouth area and count to 10 breaths before administering a further puff. This ensures that your child breathes in all the salbutamol medicine.

## Your treatment plan:

Reliever (blue) salbutamol with spacer. Use as follows:

- DAY 1      8-10 puffs                      6 times a day (4 hourly)
- DAY 2      6-8 puffs                                  4 times a day (5-6 hourly)
- DAY 3      4-6 puffs                                  3 times a day (6-8 hourly)
- DAY 4      2-4 puffs                                  2 times a day (12 hourly)

## What should I look out for at home?

Children breathe faster than an adult but it is important to look for signs that your child is struggling to breathe. Children use accessory muscles to breathe when they are struggling. You may notice:

- Deep drawing in of the muscles around their rib cage.
- In-drawing of the muscles in between each rib.
- Pulling in at the base of the neck area.
- Flaring of their nostrils.

These are all signs of distress so if you notice these, you should give your child 10 rescue puffs using the inhaler with the spacer device, and seek medical advice from your GP or NHS 111. In an emergency, visit your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).

## How should I care for my child at home?

- ✓ Give them plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations.
- ✓ If they become warm and have a temperature, give your child regular paracetamol and/or ibuprofen, if your child can take it (always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose).
- ✓ Give them the reliever blue inhaler as directed on this leaflet.
- ✓ Encourage them to have plenty of fluids and a light diet as tolerated.
- x Do not allow them to return to school or nursery until you feel they have completely recovered.

**Please arrange a GP appointment for your child within 48 hours of leaving hospital for a follow-up. However, if you feel there is no improvement and your child's symptoms are getting worse, seek further medical advice immediately from your GP, NHS 111 or your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).**

## Can I find out more?

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please speak to one of our nurses. If you need help when you return home, please contact your GP.

### **This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/accident-emergency/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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