



# Adult asthma

## What to expect when you're admitted to hospital with an asthma flare-up

If you come into hospital with an asthma flare-up (when your asthma suddenly gets worse), you may feel frightened, worried or confused. This is completely understandable and you are not alone.

This guide will help you to understand what could happen during your hospital stay. It also explains the key parts of your care so that you know what good care should look like and can feel more informed and involved in decisions about your treatment.

## When you are admitted to hospital

There are some important aspects of care that you should receive:



Tests including measurement of your heart rate, breathing rate, oxygen levels, blood pressure, blood tests and a chest X-ray.



Medication to help your breathing, such as steroid tablets, oxygen and nebulisers (a mask that gives medicine to open up your airways as a mist that you breathe in). You may also be given antibiotics if there are signs of infection.



The severity of your flare-up should be assessed and recorded in your notes at initial assessment.



Review from a specialist respiratory doctor, nurse or physiotherapist within 24 hours of arriving at hospital.



You may receive additional treatment depending on your needs.

## Why is this important?

Steroids can help to ensure that your asthma gets better as soon as possible when you are in hospital. When your doctors/nurses know how severe your asthma flare-up is, it helps them to understand how to care for you best.

### Questions you can ask your doctor/nurse/physiotherapist during your stay

- > Have I been treated with steroids since I was admitted?
- > How severe is my asthma flare-up?
- > Have I had a review from a respiratory nurse/doctor?

### Tips from the NRAP adult patient panel

- > Bring your asthma action plan or any notes about your condition that you think are important for doctors/nurses to know.
- > To help with your breathing, look at the [Asthma + Lung UK guidance on breathlessness](#).

# When you are discharged from hospital

Before you go home, your healthcare team should:



check you are on the right inhaler and how you use your inhaler to get the best out of it



review the medications you take every day to keep your asthma under control



make sure you know which medications to take and how to take them



give you/review your personalised asthma action plan



discuss your asthma triggers



offer you help and treatment to stop smoking (if appropriate).

Once you're home, you should have:



a follow-up appointment from a healthcare professional trained in asthma care within 4 weeks of discharge to check that you are recovering well.

## Why is this important?

It's important for hospitals to make sure that they give you the appropriate medications, referrals and guidance when being discharged from hospital to help you to continue getting better and have the best chance of staying out of hospital in the future. Admission to hospital with an asthma flare-up is an important opportunity to make sure your asthma treatment plan is up to date and right for you – this can be done with the help of the specialist respiratory team.

### Questions you can ask your doctor/nurse/physiotherapist during your stay

- > Have I been given everything I need to be discharged?
- > Can you please check if I'm using my inhaler correctly?
- > Can we review my asthma plan?
- > Will I speak to another doctor or nurse about this asthma flare-up after I've gone home?



## Who are NRAP?

The National Respiratory Audit Programme (NRAP) aims to improve the quality of care, services and clinical outcomes for people with respiratory conditions (including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)). We do this by collecting data on hospital admissions and pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) courses, which are used both to inform and improve care and to produce reports with national recommendations.

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