

What to Expect If I Need to Go to Hospital

Most people with asthma don't need to go to hospital, but if you are having a more serious asthma attack and the blue reliever inhaler doesn't seem to be working well enough, it may be the best place to be.

Arriving in Hospital

Depending on where your local hospital is, you may arrive into the Accident and Emergency department (A&E) or you may go straight to the children's assessment unit. Most hospitals have an area dedicated to just children and young people with video games, DVDs and other activities.

Where ever you go, on arrival you will be triaged. This means a member of staff, usually a nurse, will check you over and measure things like how fast you are breathing and your temperature. This will help the staff to know how unwell you are and how quickly you need to be seen. If you are more unwell, you may be given medicine straight away, and may even be moved to an area where there are more staff available to look after you in a dedicated way.

If you are not seriously unwell, after triage you may need to wait a while, but will be seen by a doctor. The doctor will ask you questions about your asthma and will examine you. The doctor will then be able to decide what will be the best treatment for you.

Staying in Hospital

Sometimes, the doctor will decide it is best if you stay in hospital for a period of time. You will be moved to a bed on a ward or in a cubicle. You will have 'observations' done at regular intervals. This means you will have things like your breathing rate checked and this helps the doctors to decide if you are responding to the treatment or if more treatments (usually inhalers or nebulisers) need to be given. These observations and treatments usually continue throughout the night but the nurses will try and disturb you child as little as possible.

Whilst in hospital, you will be given menus to choose your meals and will be offered games and activities to stop you getting bored. But remember, being in hospital is about recovering and resting too.

As you start to get better, the doctors will slowly wean the medicines until they are at a level that is safe to go home.

Going Home

After you have improved, a decision will be made that you are well enough to go home. Sometimes you will improve quickly with the medicine that you have been given in A&E, and may be able to go home straight from there.

When you are going home, make sure:

- you understand exactly what to do with your medicine, how to safely reduce it and what signs to look out for that may suggest you may be getting worse and need another review by a doctor.
- You have had a review of your asthma control and you have had an opportunity to talk about any concerns you may have about your asthma
- You have had your inhaler technique checked
- You have had your asthma management plan updated

After Discharge

You should always have a review from your GP 2-7 days after having been seen in hospital to go through your overall asthma control and see if your every day treatment needs to be changed.