

# Mindful Mum | How to Spot Asthma In A Child

Healthy Child Guide – Print Out and Keep



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### Signs a child may have asthma

- feeling breathless
- wheezing (there may be a whistling sound when the child breathes)
- coughing (particularly at night)
- tight chest

### Signs asthma is getting worse and you need to contact your GP

- a drop in peak expiratory flow rate (used by GP's and given to parents to test at home)
- an increased pulse rate
- an increase in wheezing
- feeling agitated, or restless

### Signs an asthma attack is severe and needs immediate medical attention by calling 999

- the symptoms will get worse quickly
- difficulty breathing and talking
- a racing pulse
- lips and/or finger nails may turn blue
- the skin around the chest and neck may tighten
- the nostrils may flare as the child tries to breathe

### Common Triggers of Asthma In A Child

- infections, such as viral infections and some cases bacterial infections
- house dust mites
- animal fur
- pollen
- tobacco smoke
- cold air
- and chest infections
- emotional or stressful situations
- exercise
- some painkillers such as aspirin or ibuprofen
- food containing sulfites (concentrated fruit juice, jam, shrimp)

### Asthma Attack Overview

An asthma attack may vary in both severity and length of time. Asthma attacks are unpredictable, although they are often worse at night or with exercise.

### How do I spot asthma in a very young child or toddler?

Diagnosing asthma in very young children can be difficult because 'wheezing' can be a common problem (one in seven) in children during the first five years.

If your child is under the age of two, it is even more difficult to tell if they have asthma.

### What happens during an asthma attack?

The airways of the lungs (bronchi) become inflamed and swollen. When irritated, the muscles around the bronchi narrow and tighten, and there may be an increase in the production of sticky mucus, or phlegm.

However, the narrowing of the airways is usually reversible, either naturally, or by using medicines.

#### Sources:

- NHS Clinical Knowledge Summaries - [Asthma In Children](#), (Accessed 2010)
- Asthma UK, [Asthma and Your Child](#), Website, (Accessed 2010)



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