“1 in 9 people in Australia have asthma. That is around 2.5 million people or 11% of the population. 419 people died from asthma in 2014.”

What is Asthma?
Asthma is a long-term lung condition. People with asthma have sensitive airways in their lungs which react to triggers, causing a ‘flare-up’. In a flare-up, the muscles around the airway squeeze tight, the airways swell and become narrow and there is more mucus. These things make it harder to breathe.

What are the Symptoms of Asthma?
A person’s asthma symptoms can vary over time - sometimes they will have no symptoms, especially when their asthma is well-controlled. Symptoms often vary from person to person, but they are most commonly:

• Breathlessness
• Wheezing
• Tight feeling in the chest
• Continuing cough

Who Gets Asthma and Why?
- Asthma affects people of all ages. Some people get asthma when they are young; others when they are older.
- The causes are not entirely understood, although people with asthma often have a family history of asthma, eczema and hayfever.
- Research has shown that exposure to tobacco smoke (especially as a baby or young child), obesity and some chemicals can increase the risk of developing asthma.

An asthma flare-up can happen to anyone with asthma, at any time. Asthma flare-ups can get worse very quickly. Do not wait until asthma is severe to start first aid.

How to Respond
If you are experiencing a severe or life-threatening asthma attack, call an ambulance and then start asthma first aid. If you are experiencing a mild to moderate asthma attack, start asthma first aid.

HEALTH TIPS SEPTEMBER 2018
ASTHMA AWARENESS WEEK

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Asthma First Aid

1. Sit the person upright
   - Do not lie them down
   - Do not leave them alone

2. Give a separate puffs of blue/grey reliever puffer
   - Shake the puffer
   - Press the puffer into the spacer
   - Take 4 puffs from the spacer
   - Repeat until 4 puffs have been taken
   - Remember: Shake. 4 puffs. 4 breaths
   - Or give 2 separate doses of blue/grey reliever puffer (4 puffs in total)
   - Do not give a separate dose of blue/grey reliever puffer if the person is already using a long-acting inhaler

3. Wait 4 minutes
   - If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever puffer
   - Or give 2 doses of blue/grey reliever puffer over 4 minutes up to 3 max doses of blue/grey reliever puffer

4. If there is still no improvement call emergency assistance
   - Dial Triple Zero (000)
   - Keep giving 4 puffs every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives
   - Call your nearest hospital as soon as possible

Call emergency assistance immediately - Dial Triple Zero (000)
- If the person is not breathing
- If the person’s asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- If the person is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- If you are not sure if it’s asthma
- If the person is known to have Anaphylaxis - follow their Anaphylaxis Action Plan, then give Asthma First Aid

Anaphylaxis reliever medication is unlikely to harm, even if the person does not have asthma

Asthma Australia
Contact your local Asthma Foundation
1800 ASTHMA HelpLine 13 25 03 asthmaustralia.org.au

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