

First aid for asthma

Condition in which the air passages in the lungs constrict (figure 7.2) and interfere with normal breathing.

Causes

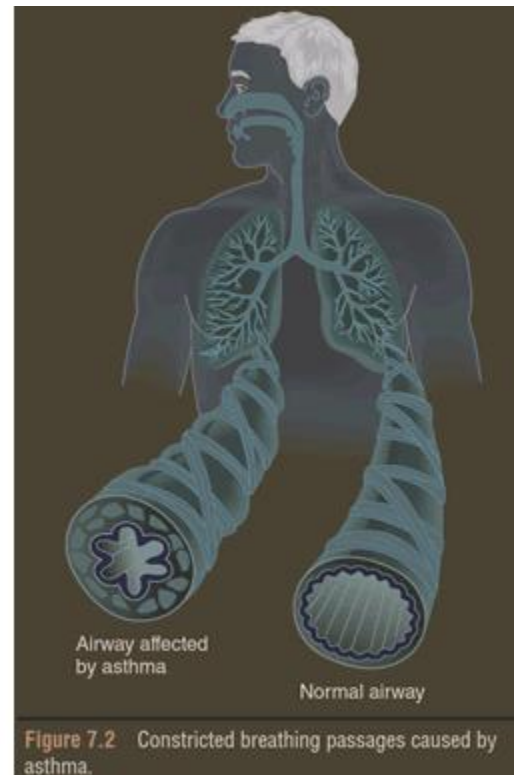
- Allergic reaction to dust, molds, pet dander, or other substances
- Exposure to cold environments such as ice-skating rinks
- Exposure to smoke or other inhaled substances
- Adverse response to strenuous exercise

Ask if players are experiencing...

- Tightness in the chest
- Shortness of breath

Check for signs...

- Trouble exhaling
- Wheezing noises when breathing
- Increased respiratory rate (normally 12-20 breaths per minute at rest)
- Fingernails, lips, or skin may turn blue or gray
- Pulse rate may increase to 120 beats per minute or more
- Athlete is noticeably frightened



Treatment

If the athlete has an asthma inhaler or medicine, do the following:

1. Send someone to retrieve the athlete's inhaler or medicine and have the athlete use the medicine when it arrives.
2. If necessary, you may assist the athlete in using the inhaler or taking the medicine.*
3. Monitor breathing and provide CPR if needed (if either is needed, send for emergency medical assistance).
4. Monitor the athlete's skin and lip color. If either changes to blue or gray, send for emergency medical assistance.
5. Call for emergency medical assistance if the athlete shows no signs of improvement a few minutes after administering the medication.
6. If the athlete recovers within a few minutes, call the athlete's parents or guardian to take the athlete to a physician.

If asthma medicine is not available or the athlete does not respond to medication, do the following:

1. Send for emergency medical assistance.
2. Monitor breathing and provide CPR if needed.
3. Place the athlete in a seated or semi-reclining position.
4. Monitor and treat for shock as needed.
5. Reassure the athlete.

*Administer an Epi-pen when a victim is unable to do so only if you have been trained to use it properly, the medication has been prescribed by a physician, and such administration is allowed by law.