

## GETTING HELP DURING AN ASTHMA ATTACK

### Background

None

### Assessment

- Ask participant to describe what they do when they are having severe asthma symptoms.

### Educational Messages

- The most important things you can do during an acute asthma episode are:
  1. Giving asthma medicine as directed (by the Action Plan).
  2. Removing yourself from anything that is triggering symptoms.
  3. Seeking medical help as needed.
- There are several things you can do to reduce your discomfort and symptoms during an asthma episode in addition to giving them medicine. These include:
  1. Calming down. Anxiety about asthma sometimes makes the symptoms worse.
  2. Reducing activity level if having moderate to severe symptoms.
  3. Find a comfortable position. Provide privacy, because embarrassment can make it hard for them to focus on using medication/calming down.
  4. Belly breathing.
  5. Get a glass of water. A dry throat or dehydration can make symptoms worse because the airways may become more reactive.
  6. Remember it's never wrong to call 911 if you think you can't breathe.

### Actions

CHW	Participant/Caregiver

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate “Belly Breathing”.</li> <li>• Take participant through “Belly Breathing” exercise.</li> <li>• Teach participant other relaxation techniques, including speaking in a calm voice, providing privacy, distraction (do a puzzle, play with gameboy, favorite video to watch).</li> <li>• Review signs of asthma getting worse. These are signs that the participant is working hard to breathe.</li> <li>• Peak flow number does not get higher</li> <li>• Breathing is hard, noisy, and fast</li> <li>• The nose opens wide when participant breathes</li> <li>• Spaces sink in between the ribs or around the collar bones when your participant breathes in</li> <li>• Participant has trouble walking or talking</li> <li>• Face, lips, or fingernails turn gray or blue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of “Belly Breathing” and other relaxation techniques.</li> <li>• Practice “Belly Breathing” technique when well, so that it will be useful during an asthma attack.</li> <li>• Learn when to reduce the participant’s activity level to help improve asthma symptoms.</li> <li>• Describe signs that a participant is working hard to breathe.</li> </ul>
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### Follow-up Visits

Instructions as needed

### Supplies

Supplies given to participant/caregiver

### Education Handouts

Handouts given to participant/caregiver

### Referral