

factfile Rugby & Asthma



'Asthma is often seen as a reason not to exercise or play sports. In fact, for most people with asthma, exercise and sport are good for their condition. We need to break down this barrier and encourage people – particularly children – to become more involved in sports, take more exercise and lead a healthier lifestyle. Rugby can play its part in tackling asthma by encouraging people with well controlled asthma to get involved, and by providing a safe environment in which they can play and train, from grassroots clubs up to the England Team.'

DR MIKE ENGLAND, RFU COMMUNITY RUGBY MEDICAL OFFICER

1 in 10 children has asthma in the UK

Rugby & Asthma

This factfile covers:

- Top tips to manage your asthma while playing rugby
- What to do in an asthma attack
- Where can I get more information?

This factfile is to help you support children and young people with asthma to help them achieve their full potential. Many coaches and youth club organisers are worried about working with children with asthma as they are worried about the effects of asthma medicines and the risk of an asthma attack. By following these simple steps you will enable any child with asthma to participate as much as they are able and give them the confidence that they are being looked after by an informed professional.

The main worry for children and young people with asthma playing rugby is the effect of cold air as this may cause the muscles around the airways to tighten, making breathing more difficult. To minimise the effect of cold air ensure that everyone is warmed up thoroughly and that they have taken their inhaler beforehand.

Common triggers: Rugby



Cold air



Rugby & Asthma

Top tips to manage your asthma while playing rugby

- If rugby makes a child's asthma worse always ensure that they use their reliever (blue) inhaler immediately before they warm up.
- Always start your session with warm up exercises.
- Try to avoid the things that trigger their asthma (eg, smoke, pollen).
- Ensure that the child always has their reliever (blue) inhaler with them
- If they have asthma symptoms when they are playing, ensure they stop, take their reliever inhaler and wait five minutes or until they feel better before starting again.
- If a child has to sit out for five minutes try to involve them as much as possible, for example by getting them to take notes on the match or training or getting them to do some ball work (if they feel well enough to do so).
- Always end your session with warm down exercises.
- Make sure you know which children have asthma.
- Ensure the children all have an asthma attack card with them. This is especially important while playing rugby and is a reminder for the child and those around them about what to do if they are experiencing severe asthma symptoms. Contact Asthma UK's Supporter & Information team (info@asthma.org.uk; 020 7786 5000) to receive your free copy.

What to do in an asthma attack

- 1. Give the child their reliever (blue) inhaler
- 2. Sit the child up and loosen tight clothing
- 3. If there is no immediate improvement during an attack, continue to give the child one puff of their reliever inhaler every minute for five minutes or until symptoms improve.

If their symptoms do not improve in five minutes — or if you are in doubt — call 999 or a doctor urgently. The child should continue to take one puff of reliever every minute until help arrives.

If a child is having any problems during a rugby session always let their parents know, as they may need to visit their doctor or asthma nurse for an asthma review.





Asthma UK Adviceline

Ask an asthma nurse specialist 08457 01 02 03 asthma.org.uk/adviceline

Asthma UK website

Read the latest independent advice and news on asthma asthma.org.uk

Asthma UK publications

Request booklets, factfiles and other materials with independent, specialist information on every aspect of asthma

020 7786 5000 info@asthma.org.uk

Asthma UK membership

Become a member of Asthma UK and receive Asthma Magazine four times a year

020 7786 5000 membership@asthma.org.uk

For further information or a poster on exercise and asthma contact:

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