

# Preventing Asthma Related Deaths

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Asthma affects over 5 million people of all ages in the UK. Asthma attacks, although considered less serious in recent years (as they are so common), can be life-threatening and potentially fatal. The National Review of Asthma deaths (NRAD) is a confidential enquiry which looked into the circumstances surrounding asthma related deaths in the UK and made recommendations to improve care with the aim to reduce the number of fatalities.

Recommendations for the improvement of care for asthma patients include the following:

- Asthma patients prescribed more than 12 reliever inhalers in a year should have an urgent review of their asthma control
- People suffering with asthma should be given a structured review by a doctor or asthma nurse with specialised training at least once a year
- Every NHS hospital and general practice should have a named clinical lead for asthma services
- People suffering with asthma should be provided with a personal asthma action plan (PAAP). This should help the individual to spot when their asthma symptoms are getting worse, what to do to get them under control and what to do in an emergency
- After attending the emergency department following an asthma attack, patients should be followed up in hospital outpatients.
- Patients are also advised to make an appointment with the GP within 48 hours of leaving hospital. This enables the GP or asthma nurse to update the PAAP, review the asthma medication and check inhaler technique to try and prevent an asthma attack in the future
- As smoking can irritate the lungs and bring on asthma symptoms, smokers with asthma should be provided with treatment and advice from smoking-cessation services.
- Better education should be given to health professionals, parents, carers and children about the factors which increase the risk of an attack and how to manage asthma and its symptoms

More advice, support and information can be found on Asthma UK's website at [www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk)

*Asthma attacks can be life-threatening and potentially fatal*

*The National Review of Asthma Deaths (NRAD) has made key recommendations to prevent asthma related deaths in the UK*

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