DISCHARGE FROM HOSPITAL FOLLOWING AN ASTHMA ATTACK

You have been sent home from hospital following treatment for your asthma. You have been treated and then observed for a period of time to make sure that the asthma attack does not re-occur and you can now continue your treatment at home.

An asthma attack is a clear sign that your asthma is not under control. It is essential that you keep the follow up appointment that will be sent to you, this is to review your medication and recovery and to try and prevent further attacks.

What happens to your body during an asthma attack?

Asthma is a variable condition that affects the airways – the small tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs. During an asthma attack the muscles around the airways tighten so that the airways become narrower. The lining of the airways also becomes inflamed (swollen) making it difficult to breathe, leading to coughing, wheezing, breathlessness and chest tightness.

Asthma treatment

Asthma cannot be cured but it can be controlled so that attacks can be prevented. For the majority of people who receive appropriate treatment, (and take it correctly) asthma should not interfere with your life.

Relievers
A reliever is a short acting inhaler (usually blue) that is taken immediately to relieve asthma symptoms by relaxing tightened airways.

If you are recovering from an acute attack/worsening asthma you may need to increase the dose of your reliever regularly for a few days until your symptoms have settled (2 to 4 puffs) you can then use your usual dose as needed. If the above dose is required more than 4 hourly then this is a severe attack. Remember to carry your reliever with you at all times.

Preventers
A preventer is a steroid inhaler which, when used regularly, prevents the swelling and inflammation in your airways.

Preventers must be taken daily to get the best effect. They should not be used to relieve sudden attacks as they do not provide immediate relief of symptoms.

Signs of worsening asthma

Your condition should continue to improve but if you have worsening of any of the following you should contact your GP/practice nurse for an urgent appointment.
• Being woken at night by shortness of breath or coughing
• Increased shortness of breath on waking
• Needing more of your reliever treatment
• A drop in your peak flow meter readings
• Shortness of breath on exertion
• Activity limited by asthma

**Emergency treatment**

If you have a bad attack that is not relieved by your inhalers, particularly if your symptoms are getting worse or you are too breathless to speak in sentences:

1. Take 2 puffs of Salbutamol/reliever inhaler via your spacer every 2 minutes. (You can take up to 10 puffs).

2. If there is no improvement in your symptoms call 999, and repeat step 1 until help arrives.

**If your symptoms improve and you do not need emergency treatment you should see your GP/asthma nurse within 24 hours.**

**Discharge Check List**

- Inhaler Technique checked: Yes / No
- Your peak flow reading on:
  - arrival: ..................L/min
  - discharge: ..................L/min
  - best/predicted: ..................L/min
- Medicines given: Yes / No
- Oral steroids – dose and length of course
  ........................................................................................................................................................................
- Inhaled steroids (preventer) – dose
  ........................................................................................................................................................................
- Bronchodilators (reliever) – dose
  ........................................................................................................................................................................
- Other
  ........................................................................................................................................................................
- Clinic appointment requested with respiratory nurses: Yes / No
Data Protection
Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us improve the services available your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews. Further information is available in the leaflet Disclosure of Confidential Information IL137, via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website or the PALS Service.

Information Leaflet: NoIL482
Version: 1
Title: Discharge from hospital following an asthma attack
First Published: August 2014
Review Date: August 2016
Author: Respiratory Nursing Team

This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats upon request