

**NICE** National Institute for  
Health and Care Excellence



# Asthma pathway (BTS, NICE, SIGN)

NICE guideline

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[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng244](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng244)

# Your responsibility

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not mandatory to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

All problems (adverse events) related to a medicine or medical device used for treatment or in a procedure should be reported to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency using the [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it. They should do so in the context of local and national priorities for funding and developing services, and in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities. Nothing in this guideline should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with complying with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should [assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations](#) wherever possible.

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This guideline should be read in conjunction with NG245 and QS25.

## Overview

This asthma pathway links to recommendations and resources from the British Thoracic Society (BTS), National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) on diagnosing, monitoring and managing asthma in adults, young people and children.

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This asthma pathway contains

- BTS/NICE/SIGN collaborative guideline
- BTS/SIGN guidance
- NICE technology appraisal guidance
- Scottish Medicines Consortium guidance
- NICE products on asthma.

BTS and SIGN have retained the recommendations on non-pharmacological management, managing acute attacks and managing difficult asthma.

See also, the [NICE topic page on asthma](#) and the [NICE quality standard on asthma](#).

**Future/planned updates:** BTS and SIGN have been working together to agree on the actions to be taken in relation to revalidating/updating the areas covered in the BTS/SIGN British guideline on the management of asthma (SIGN 158) that fall outside the scope of the collaborative guideline.

Details on the approach can be found in the [scoping summary](#).

For queries, contact [asthma enquiries](#).

# Diagnosis

## Initial clinical assessment

See [recommendations on initial clinical assessment](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

See also, the [tables on alternative diagnoses in wheezy children](#) and [alternative diagnoses in adults](#) in the BTS/SIGN British guideline on the management of asthma (SIGN 158).

## Objective tests for diagnosing asthma in adults, young people and children 5 and over

See recommendations on [objective tests for diagnosing asthma in adults, young people and children aged 5 to 16 with a history suggestive of asthma](#) and the [summary of objective tests](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

## Diagnosing asthma in children under 5

See [recommendations on diagnosing asthma in children under 5](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

## Diagnosing occupational asthma

See [recommendations on diagnosing occupational asthma](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma and the [BTS clinical statement on occupational asthma](#).

# Monitoring asthma control

See [recommendations on monitoring asthma control](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

# Managing chronic asthma

## Pharmacological management

### Treatment principles

See [recommendations on principles of pharmacological treatment](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

### Inhalers

See [recommendations on inhalers](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

### Environmental impact of inhaler devices

See [recommendations on the environmental impact of inhaler devices](#) in the BTS/SIGN British guideline on the management of asthma (SIGN 158).

### People 12 years and over

See [recommendations on pharmacological management in people aged 12 and over](#) and the [summary of pharmacological management in people aged 12 years and over](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

See also the [Accelerated Access Collaborative consensus pathway on the management of uncontrolled asthma in adults](#).

### Children aged 5 to 11

See [recommendations on pharmacological management in children aged 5 to 11](#) and the [summary of pharmacological management in children aged 5 to 11](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

## Children under 5

See [recommendations on pharmaceutical management in children under 5](#) and the [summary of pharmacological management in children under 5](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

## Decreasing maintenance therapy

See [recommendations on decreasing maintenance therapy](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

## Adherence

See [recommendations on adherence](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

## Non-pharmacological management

See [recommendations on non-pharmacological management](#) in the BTS/SIGN British guideline on the management of asthma (SIGN 158).



# Managing acute asthma

See [recommendations on managing acute asthma](#) in the BTS/SIGN British guideline on the management of asthma (SIGN 158).

# Managing difficult and severe asthma

## Difficult asthma

See [recommendations on managing difficult asthma](#) in the BTS/SIGN British guideline on the management of asthma (SIGN 158).

## Specialist therapies for severe asthma

See [recommendations on specialist therapies for severe asthma](#) in the BTS/SIGN British guideline on the management of asthma (SIGN 158).

See the [NICE topic page on asthma](#) for interventional procedures guidance and early value assessments on severe asthma.

For NICE technology appraisal guidance on severe asthma (which applies in England and Wales), see:

- [Tezepelumab for treating severe asthma](#)
- [Dupilumab for treating severe asthma with type 2 inflammation](#)
- [Mepolizumab for treating severe eosinophilic asthma](#)
- [Benralizumab for treating severe eosinophilic asthma](#)
- [Reslizumab for treating severe eosinophilic asthma](#)
- [Omalizumab for treating severe persistent allergic asthma](#)

See [Scottish Medicines Consortium guidance on medicines for severe asthma](#).

For Wales specific medicines advice and guidance, see [All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre](#).

## Specific management issues

See [recommendations on specific management issues](#) in the BTS/SIGN British guideline on the management of asthma (SIGN 158).

# Managing asthma in pregnancy, during labour and when breastfeeding

See [recommendations on asthma in pregnancy and breastfeeding](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

For recommendations on intrapartum care, see the [NICE guideline on intrapartum care for women with existing medical conditions or obstetric complications and their babies](#).

See [recommendations on management during labour](#) in the BTS/SIGN British guideline on the management of asthma (SIGN 158).

# Asthma in adolescents

See [recommendations on asthma in adolescents](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

# Occupational asthma

See [recommendations on occupational asthma](#) in the BTS/SIGN British guideline on the management of asthma (SIGN 158).

# Self-management

See [recommendations on self-management](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

## Risk-stratified care

See the [recommendation on risk-stratified care](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.



# Organisation and delivery of care

See [recommendations on organisation and delivery of care](#) in the BTS, NICE and SIGN guideline on asthma.

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SIGN ISBN: 978-1-909103-91-7