

## What is thunderstorm asthma?

Thunderstorm asthma is asthma that is triggered by a particular type of thunderstorm when there is high amounts of grass pollen in the air (typically between October and December).

## Who is at risk?

- Anyone with asthma (or a history of asthma).
- Anyone with hay fever (allergy affecting the nose) during spring.

If you feel short of breath, tight in the chest, wheezy or have a cough during pollen season – you might have undiagnosed asthma.



To receive this publication in an accessible format phone **1300 761 874**, using the National Relay Service **13 36 77** if required, or email the Environmental Health Policy and Risk Management Unit [environmental.healthunit@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:environmental.healthunit@health.vic.gov.au)

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# Thunderstorm asthma can be life-threatening

Know the risks. Get prepared. Stay safe.

For more information visit [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/thunderstorm-asthma](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/thunderstorm-asthma)





## Get ready for grass pollen season

You can reduce your chances of being affected by thunderstorm asthma.

Avoid thunderstorms during this season, especially the wind gusts before the storm.

Go inside, close doors and windows, and turn off air conditioning that may bring outside air in.

Learn asthma first aid, and make sure you understand what to do if you get an asthma flare or attack.

Check the epidemic thunderstorm asthma forecast regularly on the VicEmergency website or app.

## If you have asthma:

- See your doctor regularly, including to create or review your asthma action plan.
- Carry your reliever medication with you at all times during spring.

## If you have hay fever:

- See your doctor or pharmacist to discuss your best treatment and assess your risk of thunderstorm asthma.
- Carry reliever medication with you at all times during spring.

# If you think someone is having an asthma attack...



**Step 1** – Sit the person upright.



**Step 2** – Shake the blue/grey puffer, put 1 puff into a spacer, and take 4 breaths from the spacer. Repeat this 4 times.



**Step 3** – Wait 4 minutes, and repeat step 2 if the person does not feel better.



**Step 4** – If the person still does not feel better, call triple zero. Repeat step 2 every 4 minutes while you wait.