

Do you live with a Respiratory condition?

For people who would like further information about respiratory disease, Harbour Health would like to bring to your attention a few excellent web sites.

Useful web sites:

If you would like a demonstration on how to use your inhaler, I suggest this excellent web site from asthma UK.

N.B 'clickhalers' are not available in New Zealand

http://www.asthma.org.uk/using_your.html

There are 2 excellent New Zealand websites which offer support, advice and education for people with asthma and COPD.

1. The Asthma and Respiratory Foundation

<http://www.asthmanz.co.nz>

2. Asthma New Zealand – the Lung Association

<http://www.asthma-nz.org.nz>

Do you want to check how well controlled your asthma is?

If you go to this web site, you can score your symptoms and find out if you are in need of further assistance from your GP or asthma nurse.

<http://www.asthmascore.com.au>

ASK YOURSELF THESE 3 QUESTIONS?

If you answer 'Yes' to any of these questions, your asthma may not be as well controlled as it could be: It may be best to see your GP or asthma nurse.

I have symptoms of asthma (e.g. cough or wheeze) more than twice a week?	Y/N
I am limited with my activities due to my asthma symptoms?	Y/N
I sometimes have symptoms of asthma at night	Y/N
I need my reliever inhaler more than twice a week	Y/N
I have needed emergency treatment for my asthma in the last year	Y/N

Asthma Clinics:

Harbour Health (in collaboration with the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation) has developed an Asthma Course for Practice nurses. There are now over 150 trained asthma nurses in the Auckland area, mainly in the North Shore and Rodney region.

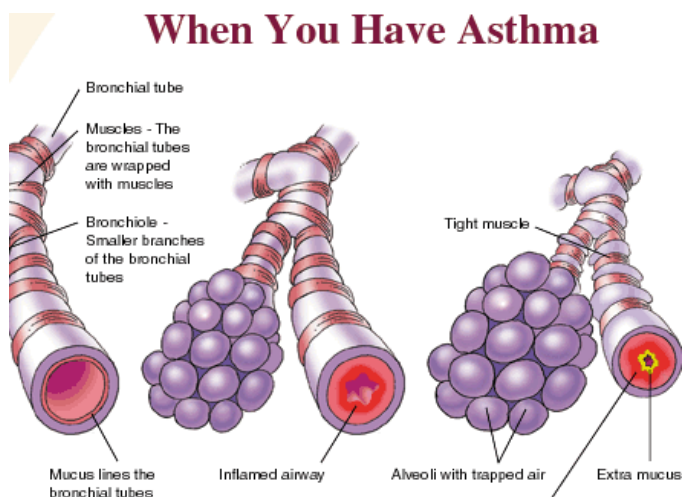
These nurses have formed a group for ongoing support and education and are known affectionately as 'GASP' nurses, which stands for 'Giving Asthma Support to Patients'. Here is a list of the current Practices on the North Shore where there are 'GASP' nurses employed.

Within Harbour Health the following practice employ 'GASP' asthma nurses

Albany Basin A & M	Kitchener Rd Medical Centre
Albany Family Medical Centre	Kowhai Clinic
Archers Medical Centre	Kowhai Surgery
Belmont Medical Centre	Lockwoods Surgery
Browns Bay Medical Centre	Massey University, H & C S
Byron Chambers	Medical Centre at Apollo
Devonport Medical Centre	North Harbour Medical Centre
Fenwick Medical Centre	Onewa Road Doctors
Glenfield Medical Centre	Shakespeare Medical Centre
Glenfield Doctors on Chartwell	Silverdale Medical
Hauraki Medical Centre	Sunnynook Medical Centre
Healthzone (Millenium Inst.)	Sunset Rd Family Doctors
Kawau Bay Health	Waiake Medical Centre

What is asthma?

Asthma is a long term condition affecting the breathing tubes (bronchioles), in the lungs. The muscles around the bronchioles become tight and swelling and mucus develops inside the bronchioles.



This may cause symptoms such as wheezing, coughing (especially at night), shortness of breath, or a ‘tight’ feeling in the chest. Sometimes when exercising, catching a cold, or coming into contact with a trigger (e.g. dust, pollen or certain animals), these symptoms may increase in severity and you may require more treatment.

Medications:

Your ‘**reliever**’ inhaler (usually blue in colour) relaxes the muscles around the bronchioles, and is effective for about 4 hours. This should only be used when you are feeling short of breath. **If you require more than two doses of your ‘reliever’ inhaler per week, or if you use more than 2 inhaler devices per year, your asthma may not be well controlled.**

Your ‘**preventer**’ inhaler (usually brown or orange in colour) reduces the swelling and mucus inside the bronchioles. Although it starts working immediately, it can take several weeks to feel the benefit. It therefore must be taken regularly, **every day** as directed by the doctor.

A ‘**symptom controller**’ (eg. Serevent or Oxis) works like the reliever and relaxes the muscles around the bronchioles, providing symptom relief for up to 12 hours. It is taken daily with the ‘preventer’.

A ‘**combination inhaler**’ (known as Symbicort or Seretide) works like the symptom controller and the preventer combined. It too must be taken every day.

What does the nurse-led asthma clinic offer

Our trained asthma nurse will take an asthma history and assessment, plus offer you help, support and advice with :



Coping with your Triggers:

Using your inhaler correctly:

Measuring how well you can breathe e.g. peak flow diary:

Understanding your medications:

Completing an Action Plan, so that **you** are in control of your asthma:

6 Steps to better asthma control

Step 1: Try a Team approach

Don't ever feel you are alone. Talk it over with your family, whanau, GP or asthma nurse

Step 2: Take your medication

Your doctor has prescribed your asthma medication which should be used as directed

Step 3: Track your symptoms

Make a note of your symptoms or record your peak flow readings in a diary. Ask your GP or asthma nurse

Step 4: Control your triggers

Ensure you know how to prevent some triggers, and what to do when you react to a trigger.

Step 5: Treat asthma attacks

Do you know what to do in an asthma attack? Ask your GP or asthma nurse to explain it to you.

Step 6: Action Plan

Your GP or asthma nurse can provide you with an Asthma Action Plan, so that you can manage your asthma better in the future.

Further information:

If you would like further information regarding Asthma or COPD, please contact:

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