

**A**STHMA: is a common condition that causes coughing, wheezing, tightness of the chest and breathlessness. Most people with asthma live normal lives. Very rarely a severe asthma attack can be fatal.

There are several triggers that can result in a flare up of symptoms. These include infections such as colds and flu, irritants such as dust, cigarette smoke and chemical fumes, exercise in cold air and emotions such as stress.



Treatments, along with removing triggers will reduce the severity and frequency of asthma attacks.

#### **+** ACTIONS TO TAKE:

- Sit the casualty down (do not lie the casualty down).
- Encourage slow steady breathing.
- Ensure the casualty uses their inhaler. If the symptoms do not go away repeat one puff of the inhaler every minute for 5 minutes.
- If symptoms do not go away after 5 minutes, call an ambulance.

**E**PILEPSY AND FITS: There are many things that can cause a person to fit. Examples include epilepsy, a lack of oxygen to the brain, a head injury or even as a result of the body's temperature becoming too high (this is common in babies and young children).

#### **+** ACTIONS TO TAKE:

- Move them away from anything that could cause injury, such as a hot surface or sharp object.
- Cushion their head.
- Loosen any tight clothing around the neck.
- When convulsions stop, turn the casualty onto their side.
- Do not restrain the casualty during a seizure.



- Do not put anything into the casualty's mouth during a seizure.

- Call an ambulance if:



- It is the person's first seizure.
  - They have injured themselves.
  - The seizure lasts for more than five minutes.
  - The casualty has a series of seizures.
- After a seizure the casualty may not be fully aware of their surrounds or may be very drowsy. In either case, a first aider must stay with the recovering casualty for a minimum of 30 minutes to:
    - Ensure a full recovery has occurred.
    - Ensure they go home safely (N.B not driving themselves) into the care of another person with advice to notify the GP of the event.

**MENINGITIS:** The common germs that cause meningitis are viruses and bacteria. There are many different bacteria that can cause meningitis and the meningococcal is the most common which can also lead to septicaemia. Meningitis and septicaemia are difficult to recognise and in the early stages, signs and symptoms can be similar to flu.



#### Symptoms:

- Meningitis: Fever, severe headache, vomiting, dislike of bright lights, stiff neck, muscle pain, drowsiness.
- Septicaemia: Fever – cold hands and feet, vomiting, severe muscle pain, spots or rash (the glass test does not fade these when pressed firmly on the skin), stomach cramps and diarrhoea.
- The symptoms can appear in any order and some may not appear at all.

#### ACTIONS TO TAKE:

A fever with spots or a rash is a medical emergency requiring treatment at the A&E department

**SWINE FLU:** The second wave of swine flu is anticipated to start at the end of September and last until the end of December. The virus is spread by touching infected surfaces or by an infectious person coughing or sneezing in close proximity. If you have had contact with an infected person there is no need to isolate yourself from other people unless you develop symptoms. The following advice is intended to help with the recognition of swine flu symptoms.

#### Symptoms:

- Fever (temp 38C, possible chills).
- Sudden cough, sneezing, sore throat.



- Headaches, limb pain.
- Loss of appetite, fatigue.

#### ACTIONS TO TAKE:

Those with swine flu symptoms should be advised to stay at home until the symptoms have gone, limit contact with others, take paracetamol based

remedies, rest and drink plenty of fluids. The infected person should be advised not to go to their GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. For medical advice they should call the Swine Flu Information Line for free on **0800 1 513 513** or use the NHS Direct [NHS Direct Wales website](#). Additional advice to students and staff is given on the Bangor University 'Home' webpage.

The following practical steps will help to reduce the risk of infection:

- Wash hands regularly with soap and water or use alcohol hand rubs.
- Clean surfaces with antibacterial wipes regularly (including telephones) to get rid of germs.
- Use tissues to cover your mouth or nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Place used tissues in a bin as soon as possible.

