

## Thunderstorm Asthma

During spring season people may notice an increase in asthma and hay fever due to a high grass pollen count. This also brings the chance of thunderstorm asthma.

Thunderstorm asthma is thought to be triggered by a unique combination of high grass pollen counts and a certain type of thunderstorm. This occurs when pollen

grains from grasses get swept up in the wind and carried for long distances. Just before the storm, some burst open and release tiny particles that are concentrated in the wind, and blown down to ground, where people can breathe them in. They are small enough to go deep into the lungs.

For people who have asthma or hay fever this can cause severe asthma symptoms, making it difficult to breathe. When a large number of people develop asthma symptoms over a short period of time, this is known as epidemic thunderstorm asthma. These epidemic thunderstorm asthma events don't happen every year but when they do, they can happen during grass pollen season, which is normally from October through December.



We saw this happen last year during spring with record numbers of people requiring treatment for thunderstorm asthma. As a result the following apps have been developed to help you manage asthma.

**The Asthma First Aid app** covers first aid in the event of an asthma emergency and ability to review each of the four first aid steps in training mode.

<https://www.asthmaaustralia.org.au/sa/about-asthma/resources/onair/2017/august/asthma-first-aid-app>

**The Melbourne Pollen Count App** provides real-world pollen count data during the Melbourne grass pollen season (October 1 to December 31)



# HEALTH NEWS

<http://www.melbournepollen.com.au/mobile-app/>

## **What can you do to help your child manage their asthma or hay fever?**

- Notify the school if your child has asthma or hay fever.
- Make sure you have given the school an up to date Asthma Action Plan or Allergic Rhinitis (hay fever) Treatment Plan for your child.
- Ensure your child has their reliever medication and spacer at school.
- Ensure prevention medication is taken at home as prescribed.
- Ensure your child has regular check-ups with your doctor.
- If asthma or hay fever gets worse during thunderstorms try to stay indoors.

## **Need more help?**

If you would like further support with managing your asthma during the high pollen season, please ask your pharmacist, doctor or contact the Asthma Info Line on 1800 ASTHMA (1800 278 462) or visit [www.asthmaaustralia.org.au](http://www.asthmaaustralia.org.au)

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