



# MEDICATIONS POLICY

## The Administration of Medications by Non-Medical Personnel

All medications, including prescription and those available over-the-counter, can have serious side-effects. These side-effects may become a problem when the body is placed under the additional stress caused by physical activity.

This policy has been designed to assist individuals who do not have any medical training but may be asked to administer medications to an athlete. The policy may also assist clubs or teams in determining the contents of their first aid kit.

Sports Medicine Australia (WA Branch) strongly recommends that all non-medical personnel involved with sport adhere to the following guidelines.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### General:

- Non-medical personnel should not dispense or recommend any prescription medications. However, over-the-counter medications may be recommended to relieve mild conditions.
- Medications must be used only as directed. Recommended doses must not be exceeded.
- The use of medications must be documented for future reference.
- With the exception of mild conditions and preventative asthma medications, drugs should not be used to allow an athlete to compete when they would otherwise not be able to, ie. where a serious injury or illness would have prevented their participation.
- Using more than one drug at a time is dangerous. Be particularly wary of drinking alcohol while using medications.
- Medications should be kept in a safe place out of the reach of children.
- All medications should be used or removed from the first aid kit prior to their expiry date.

### Preparation:

- Pre-participation screening questionnaires should be used to identify members who require the use of medication.
- Emergency procedures for those using medications should be detailed prior to competition.

### Analgesics:

- It is generally safe to provide mild pain relief through the use of over-the-counter products as long as they are used according to directions.
- Paracetamol products are generally recommended over aspirin, which may slightly increase bleeding. Allergies to aspirin are also more common.

### Asthma:

- People with asthma **should** carry their own 'reliever medication' to all games and training sessions however it is often forgotten, especially by children. It is therefore recommended that an asthma reliever medication and a spacer or mini-spacer is included in first aid kits for use by those with diagnosed asthma.

- It can be useful to keep a peak flow meter in the first aid kit and to regularly test people with asthma to determine their best peak expiratory flow rate (PEFR). A PEFR of at least 80% of the athlete's best value can be used to determine when the athlete should refrain from participation in vigorous exercise.
- People with asthma may use pre-exercise preventative medication, however if this has been used and they are still having trouble breathing it is unwise to attempt exercise. If asthma develops during the activity the athlete should cease participation and use their reliever medication. If the medication reverses the asthma they may resume the exercise.
- Each person with asthma should have a **written "Asthma Action Plan"** provided by their personal physician, which includes details about treatment for Exercise-Induced Asthma. This should be kept in the first aid kit so that the person administering can check and provide the prescribed dose quickly.
- Relievers are best used through a spacer, if available. Use 1 puff at a time and ask the person to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff. The usual dosage for reliever medications is 2-4 puffs, however each medication should be used according to directions on the packaging.
- After the first dose wait for 4 minutes. If there is no improvement, provide another dose.
- If there is little or no improvement, call an ambulance immediately (Dial 000). Keep providing 4 puffs every 4 minutes until the ambulance arrives.
- The use of out-of-date asthma reliever medications has been associated with an increased risk of cardiac arrest. Therefore it is particularly important that these medications are removed from first aid kits prior to their expiry date.
- Asthma medications contain banned substances. Therefore most sports require that elite athletes with asthma provide written notification of their condition and their use of medications to their National Sporting Organisation. This should be done in writing prior to competition.

### ***Undiagnosed Breathing Difficulties***

- Non-medical personnel should not be involved in diagnosing asthma or initiating treatment. However in an emergency it may be useful to provide an asthma reliever to someone having difficulty breathing. The Asthma Foundation of WA recommends the following for a first attack of asthma:
  - If someone collapses and appears to have difficulty breathing, call an ambulance immediately (Dial 000).
  - Give 4 puffs of a reliever and repeat if no improvement. Keep giving 4 puffs every 4 minutes until the ambulance arrives.
  - No harm is likely to result from giving a reliever to someone who does not have asthma.

### **Anti-Inflammatories:**

- Although some anti-inflammatories are available without prescription, a number of these over-the-counter products contain similar amounts of the active ingredient as found in prescription drugs.
- It is important to be aware of potential side effects from the use of anti-inflammatories. These include dizziness, nausea and diarrhoea.
- Anti-inflammatories can cause major problems with stomach conditions. People with ulcers and gastro-intestinal irritations should consult their doctor prior to taking these medications.
- Ensure the athlete follows the directions on the packaging and does not exceed the recommended dose.
- Anti-inflammatories should be taken with, or immediately after food.

### **Competing Athletes:**

- Athletes may be subject to drug testing and should therefore check all medications including over the counter products as many contain banned substances.
- To check that a medication is permitted, call the Drugs in Sport Hotline on **1800 020 506**.

### **Education:**

- Anyone responsible for administering medications should be trained in sports first aid or possess a current first aid certificate.

### **Emergencies:**

- Athletes taking any medications during exercise should be monitored closely and should be seen by trained medical personnel as soon as possible if they exhibit any serious side-effects.

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

#### **Alcohol & Drug Information Service**

24 hour confidential telephone, counselling, information and referral

Toll free: 1800 198 024

#### **Australian Sports Drug Agency**

Drugs in Sport Hotline

Toll free: 1800 020 506

### **Document History**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Description of revision</b>
August 2004	1	Initial Draft
August 2004	1	Adopted by Committee
March 2008	2	Policy review and adopted
August 2010	2	Review