## Moderate asthma
- SpO₂ ≥92%
- Able to talk
- Heart rate ≤125/min
- Respiratory rate ≤30/min
- PEF ≥50% best or predicted

## Acute severe asthma
- SpO₂ <92%
- Too breathless to talk
- Heart rate >125/min
- Respiratory rate >30/min
- Use of accessory neck muscles
- PEF 33–50% best or predicted

## Life-threatening asthma
- SpO₂ <92% plus any of:
  - Silent chest
  - Poor respiratory effort
  - Agitation
  - Confusion
  - Cyanosis
  - PEF <33% best or predicted

### Life-threatening asthma criteria
- SpO₂ <92%
- Silent chest
- Poor respiratory effort
- Agitation
- Confusion
- Cyanosis
- PEF <33%

### Life-threatening asthma care
- Oxygen via facemask to maintain SpO₂ 94–98% if available
- Assess response to treatment 15 mins after β₂ bronchodilator
- If poor response
  - Arrange admission
  - Repeat β₂ bronchodilator via oxygen-driven nebuliser
- If poor response repeat β₂ bronchodilator and arrange admission
- Repeat β₂ bronchodilator via oxygen-driven nebuliser whilst arranging immediate hospital admission

### Good response
- Continue β₂ bronchodilator via spacer or nebuliser, as needed but not exceeding 4 hourly
- If symptoms are not controlled: repeat β₂ bronchodilator and refer to hospital
- Continue prednisolone until recovery (minimum 3–5 days)
- Arrange follow-up clinic visit within 48 hours
- Consider referral to secondary care asthma clinic if 2nd attack within 12 months

### Poor response
- Stay with patient until ambulance arrives
- Send written assessment and referral details
- Repeat β₂ bronchodilator via oxygen-driven nebuliser in ambulance

### Lower threshold for admission if:
- Attack in late afternoon or at night
- Recent hospital admission or previous severe attack
- Concern over social circumstances or ability to cope at home

### Nb: If a patient has signs and symptoms across categories, always treat according to their most severe features

- β₂ bronchodilator via spacer given one puff at a time, inhaled separately using tidal breathing; according to response, give another puff every 60 seconds up to a maximum of 10 puffs