

Table 1**Classification of severity of asthma attack, adapted from the 2016 SIGN/BTS guideline⁴**

Severity	Features																
Moderate acute asthma	Increasing symptoms PEF > 50-75% best or predicted No acute features of severe asthma																
Severe acute asthma	Any one of: ● PEF 33-50% best or predicted ● Respiratory rate $\geq 25/\text{min}$ ● Heart rate $\geq 110 \text{ bpm}$ ● Inability to complete sentences in one breath																
Life-threatening asthma	Any one of the following in a patient with severe asthma: <table> <tr> <th>Clinical signs</th><th>Measurements</th></tr> <tr> <td>Altered conscious level</td><td>PEF < 33%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Exhaustion</td><td>SpO₂ < 92%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Arrhythmia</td><td>PaO₂ < 8 kPa</td></tr> <tr> <td>Hypotension</td><td>Normal PaCO₂ (4.6-6.0 kPa)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Cyanosis</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Silent chest</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Poor respiratory effort</td><td></td></tr> </table>	Clinical signs	Measurements	Altered conscious level	PEF < 33%	Exhaustion	SpO ₂ < 92%	Arrhythmia	PaO ₂ < 8 kPa	Hypotension	Normal PaCO ₂ (4.6-6.0 kPa)	Cyanosis		Silent chest		Poor respiratory effort	
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Silent chest																	
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Near fatal asthma	Raised PaCO ₂ and/or requiring mechanical ventilation with raised inflation pressures																

SpO₂ = oxygen saturation; PaO₂ = partial pressure of oxygen; PaCO₂ = partial pressure of carbon dioxide