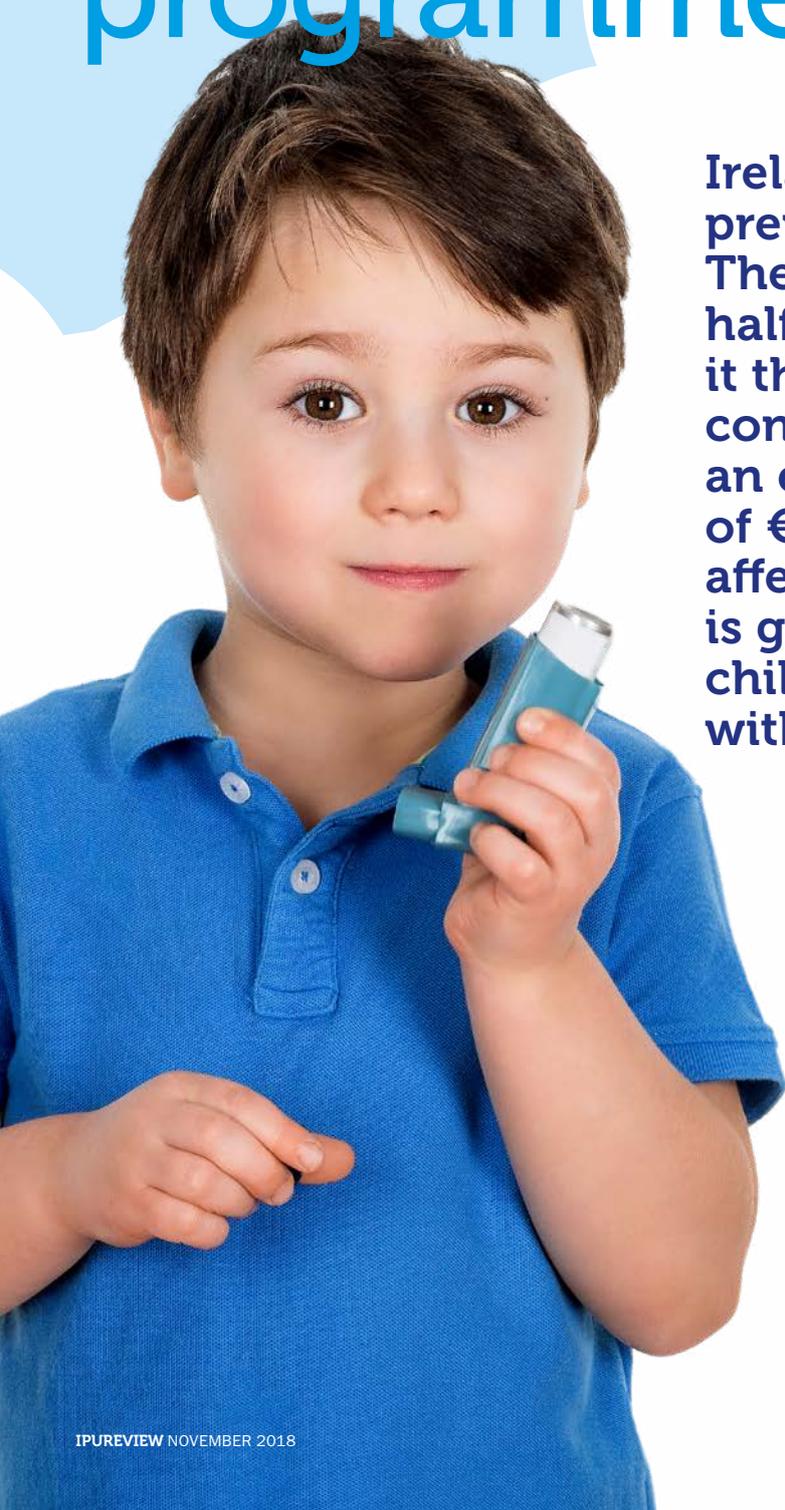




Care of adults and children with asthma – e-Learning education programme



Ireland has the fourth highest prevalence of asthma globally. The condition affects just under half a million people, making it the most common chronic condition in the country with an estimated economic burden of €500 million. The condition affects people of all ages but is generally more common in children, with one in five living with the disease.

For Irish pharmacists, people with asthma are likely to be among the most frequent customers, particularly as we head into the winter and the flu season. The pharmacist is perfectly placed to provide extra support to people with asthma, whether this be explaining the importance of good inhaler technique, encouraging compliance or even just explaining how the different types of medication work.

Despite the prevalence of the disease, many healthcare professionals express uncertainty about asthma and how to support their patients in line with international best practice.

The Asthma Society of Ireland is the national charity for asthma and acts as a united voice for people with asthma and regularly works with healthcare professionals to provide expert information on asthma and allergies. We are committed to ensuring that everyone with asthma can live a full life, symptom free.

Introduction and background

Asthma management can be complex and requires a significant amount of patient engagement and self-monitoring. Estimates suggest that up to 60% of people with asthma do not have their condition properly controlled. This leads to the appearance of asthma symptoms and puts people with asthma at risk of a serious attack. Adults with asthma miss approximately 10 days of work as a result of the condition, while children miss 12 days of school on average. Asthma is responsible for more than 20,000 emergency department visits per year, or roughly one visit every 26 minutes. Most tragically of all, one person loses their life to asthma every week in Ireland. This high figure is absolutely unacceptable, especially when it is estimated that up to 90% of these deaths are preventable.

Healthcare professionals play a key role in empowering and encouraging people with asthma to manage their condition and stay as well as possible. The Asthma Society of Ireland works very closely with healthcare professionals nationwide to achieve this goal. A person with well-controlled asthma should not need more than two puffs of salbutamol per week – this is the equivalent to one canister of reliever medication each year. While many people with asthma will keep multiple reliever inhalers (for home, school, gym bag etc.) the pharmacist has the opportunity to enquire about excessive use of reliever medication and urge patients to seek medical attention as necessary.

e-Learning education programme

The Asthma Society has worked in partnership with the National Clinical Programme for Asthma since its inception. We represent

the patient perspective and collaborate with colleagues in the HSE to assist in the conception and development of patient education materials and healthcare professional education. Most recently, ASI has collaborated with the National Clinical Programme for Asthma in the development of a comprehensive, up-to-date and highly interactive online training programme for healthcare professionals.

The *Care of Adults and Children with Asthma – E-Learning Education Programme* has been developed in conjunction with the significant clinical expertise of the National Clinical Programme for Asthma to address key issues in asthma care.

The educational programme is based on the Asthma Control in General Practice guidelines, published by the National Clinical Programme for Asthma and the 2017 report compiled by the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA). GINA releases yearly updates on asthma care, which are widely respected as international best practice standard. The ASI course provides healthcare professionals with a comprehensive understanding of international best practice in asthma care and highlights the areas key to achieving and maintaining good asthma control.

As a healthcare professional, a strong foundation in asthma care will be of substantial benefit to you and the people in your care.

The e-learning programme covers all aspects of asthma care and aims to provide healthcare professionals with the core knowledge to:

- Diagnose and assess the severity of asthma;
- Treat and monitor the condition of asthma patients;
- Develop an Asthma Action Plan in partnership with the

patient and empower the patient in ongoing self-management; and

- Recognise, assess and treat asthma attacks according to the severity of the episode.

The course is designed to provide you with the confidence and skill to provide best practice care for people with asthma, no matter what your role or scope of practice.

Course content

The course is comprised of five modules encompassing every facet of asthma care:

- Module 1**
Diagnosis and Assessment of Asthma;
- Module 2**
Treatment of Asthma;
- Module 3**
Paediatric Asthma;
- Module 4**
Guided Self-Management/ Asthma Action Plans; and
- Module 5**
Treatment of Asthma Attack.

The programme is highly interactive and requires active participation throughout. Case studies and assessments are included within each module. Completion of all assessments is necessary in order to pass each module. This removes the need for additional multiple choice questionnaires and allows you to identify gaps in your knowledge as you go.

Recommended resources to support the content of the course are signposted throughout the e-learning programme and can be downloaded from the resources menu in each module, allowing for easy reference at any time.

A variety of further support materials are also available at www.asthma.ie. These include patient education resources, inhaler device standard operating procedures, patient-friendly inhaler technique

videos and information on our Asthma in the Pharmacy Programme.

Access

The course is PC, MAC, iPad and tablet compatible and requires an internet connection. The programme can be accessed on a mobile device. However, in many cases, a small screen size may be an issue.

The course will be available on www.elearning.asthma.ie in the coming weeks. If you would like to be informed when the course is available, you can sign up to ASI's healthcare professional e-zine at www.asthma.ie. To access the course, simply log in or register with the site. The course can be found directly through the homepage of www.elearning.asthma.ie.

For more information or if you have any questions or issues, email elearning@asthma.ie or call the office on 01 817 8886.

Accreditation

The course will take approximately 15 hours to complete. Each module and review of associated resources will take approximately two to three hours to complete. From commencement, the user will have six months to complete the remainder of the modules.

The Asthma Society of Ireland has a range of support services available to healthcare professionals ranging from inhaler technique videos to education evenings and online training. Their Asthma Advice line is also available for queries on all aspects of life with asthma. To arrange a free appointment with one of their asthma specialist nurses, please call 1800 44 54 64.

For more information about any of the above, please email reception@asthma.ie or contact the office on 01 817 8886.