

The British Thoracic Society classify acute asthma exacerbations by severity:

Moderate Asthma

- Increasing symptoms
- PEF >50- 75% predicted
- No features of acute severe asthma

Acute Severe Asthma

- PEF 33-50% predicted
- Respiratory rate ≥ 25 / min
- Heart rate ≥ 110 / min
- Inability to complete sentences in one breath

Life- Threatening Asthma

In a patient with severe asthma any one of:

- PEF <33% predicted
- SpO₂ <92%
- PaO₂ <8 kPa
- Normal PaCO₂ (4.6- 6.0 kPa)
- Silent chest
- Cyanosis
- Poor respiratory effort
- Arrhythmia
- Exhaustion
- Altered consciousness
- Hypotension



Near Fatal Asthma

- Raised PaCO₂ and/ or requiring mechanical ventilation with raised inflation pressures