

The Asthma Right Care (ARC) Slide Rule has been developed as part of a global movement led by our global partner the International Primary Care Respiratory Group (IPCRG). It aims to stimulate conversations about over-reliance on short-acting beta2 agonists (SABA) to manage asthma, a global problem that far too often goes unchallenged. Conversations might be between prescribers, asthma educators, pharmacists or patients.

Try and see how you can use it to get a conversation started.

These Guidance Notes provide potential steps and questions to ask when using the ARC Slide Rule. Tailor it according to the person you are talking to. More information, including a short video showing the Slide Rule being used, can be found at [www.pcrs-uk.org/asthmarightcare](http://www.pcrs-uk.org/asthmarightcare).

**NOTE** There are some devices that do not contain 200 puffs. So please check the number in the devices you prescribe/dispense or use, and modify your messages accordingly.

Good luck with your conversations using the ARC Slide Rule and thank you for participating in the programme. Please provide any comments, suggestions and feedback to [info@pcrs-uk.org](mailto:info@pcrs-uk.org) or if you are a PCRS member, you can join the discussion on <https://pcrscommunity.forumbee.com/category/developing-asthma-right-care>.

## Top Tips for Using the Asthma Right Care Slide Rule

1. Have it somewhere you can see it i.e. on your desk close to where the patient sits down for the hard copy and/or saved to your desktop.
2. Is there a link to it embedded in your asthma review template? If not, why not ask whoever designs your templates locally to add a link to the online version?

### Asthma Slide Rule



**1. Questions for prescriber to ask themselves and a person with asthma**  
Using this slide rule, how much short-acting beta<sub>2</sub> agonist (SABA) also known as reliever/rescue/salbutamol/'blue' inhaler would you think was acceptable for a person with asthma to take in a year, week or day before you thought a review was necessary? What made you choose that?

	Increasing SABA use											
Number of SABA inhalers Rx per year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Puffs of SABA used per year*	200	400	600	800	1000	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2400
Puffs of SABA used per week	4	8	12	15	19	23	27	31	35	39	42	46
Puffs of SABA used per day	< 1	1	2	2	3	>3	4	>4	5	6	>6	7
Symptoms												

\*Some devices do not contain 200 puffs. Check the number in the devices you prescribe/dispense or use, and modify these messages accordingly

**Suggestion:** Try asking a person with asthma the following question before asking question 1 :  
'In the past 4 weeks, how often have you used your reliever/blue inhaler each day?'

Asthma Right Care Guidance Notes available at [www.pcrs-uk.org/asthmarightcare](http://www.pcrs-uk.org/asthmarightcare)



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3. Start a conversation with a colleague. This can be over a cup of coffee or why not start your practice meeting with a discussion on SABA over-reliance? Before showing them the Asthma Slide Rule, challenge your colleagues to write down an answer to one of these questions:

- How much SABA is acceptable for a person with asthma to be taking before you recommend a review? OR
- What level of patient SABA use (e.g. number of canisters/puffs) would worry/concern you?

Now hand your colleagues their Slide Rules and get them to move the slider to their chosen number. Would they now change their answer? What would they do differently? What are their thoughts? Go to Top Tip 6.

**4. Have a conversation with a patient. Example:**

- What do you know about SABA (blue inhaler) use in asthma and what it does?
- What number of canisters of blue inhaler are prescribed to you by the practice OR do you use as an asthma patient? [Note: you can choose to ask them per day/per week/per year, or wait to see what period they volunteer].

When they have chosen their answer hand them the Slide Rule and start a conversation. Example:




- You've given the answer of 6 canisters in a year. That equals 23 puffs per week; >3 puffs a day.
- What are your thoughts after seeing that? **Go to Top Tip 6**

**5. Do your local pharmacists have a copy? If not, why not introduce yourself and start a conversation using the Slide Rule? Example:**

- What number of canisters of SABA per individual asthma patient would you typically dispense in a pharmacy [Note: you can choose to ask them per day/per week/per year, or wait to see what period they volunteer].
- What number of canisters/puffs of SABA used by a person with asthma would worry/concern you? Why did you choose that number?
- What would you say is the problem with over-reliance on SABA?
- For a well-controlled asthma patient, how many times do you think a patient would use their SABA inhaler in a week?

Now hand the pharmacist the Slide Rule and get them to move the slider to their chosen number and start a conversation. Example if they say 6 in a year:

- You've mentioned that you'd typically dispense 6 canisters in a year. That equals 23 puffs per week > 3 puffs a day.
- What are your thoughts after seeing that?
- Earlier, you mentioned > 8 puffs a week would worry you. After seeing this rule would you do anything differently?
- What are your thoughts on having SABA on repeat prescription? **Go to Top Tip 6**

**Asthma Slide Rule** (reverse side: push slider back to left to begin)

**2. Questions for prescriber to ask themselves and a person with asthma**



Reflecting on your answer to Question 1, and using the number scale 0–10 below, slide to the number that reflects:

- How important is it that you organise a review? What made you select [number]? What would have made it a higher number [eg 8]
- How confident do you feel to have a conversation about their poor control of asthma? What made you select [number]? What would have made it a higher number [eg 8]?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0 = Not at all important/confident						Extremely important/confident = 10				

Note: BTS/SIGN 2016 advises that "Anyone prescribed more than one short-acting bronchodilator inhaler device a month should be identified and have their asthma assessed urgently; ICS should be considered for anyone using a SABA 3 times a week or more." NICE 2017 advise that 3 or more days a week with required use of a SABA for symptomatic relief constitutes a pragmatic threshold for uncontrolled asthma

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**6. When you have had the initial conversation with a person with asthma/nurse/GP/pharmacist turn over the Asthma Slide Rule to show the reverse side and hold a new conversation about motivation. Note the Slider should be moved back to the left-hand side.**

- On a scale of 0-10 how confident do you feel to have a conversation with a person with asthma/GP/pharmacist/nurse about reducing the dose of SABA? [Ask them to slide it to the number that best describes their level of confidence].
- You say a 6 why not a 4 or 5? What would have made it a 7?
- On a scale of 0-10 how important is it that you organise a review given the answer you gave to number of SABA puffs?

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