



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 7th August

ATHLETES URGED TO CONTROL THEIR ASTHMA ***Asthma Week 1 – 7 September. You can take control.***

Leading up to the launch of the Olympic Games and National Asthma Week the Asthma Foundation of WA urges professional athletes who have asthma to seek exemption from National Sporting Organisations so they can use their medicines and keep control of their asthma.

Chief Executive John Gummer says, "Recent reports in media outlets throughout Australia mentioned that asthma medications are prohibited by anti-doping authorities. Athletes living with asthma need to know that they can request an *exemption* to use these medications by submitting an Abbreviated Therapeutic Use Exemption request to National Sporting Organisations."

The Asthma Management Handbook endorsed by The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand, the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners states:

"Many sporting bodies require objective evidence of exercise-induced asthma/ exercise-induced bronchoconstriction in order for athletes to use asthma medications during competition."

- *The International Olympic Committee now requires documentation of asthma or exercise-induced bronchoconstriction as a prerequisite for permission to use an inhaled beta2 agonist...*
- *The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority provides information about Therapeutic Use Exemptions for athletes who suffer from medical conditions requiring treatment with prohibited substances." (National Asthma Council, 2006, page 97)*

"The Asthma Foundation is concerned that reports about prohibition of asthma medicines by anti-doping authorities may confuse the community. Effective and correct use of these medicines, as detailed by GPs in personalised Asthma Action Plans, is crucial for effective asthma control", Mr Gummer said.

Asthma Week (1 – 7 September 2008) is a national week for promoting asthma awareness, education and self management. A range of education and support activities will be held throughout the state to raise awareness of this condition and to assist the 220,000 Western Australians living with asthma.

"We urge all Western Australians, athletes and non-athletes alike, who are living with asthma to ensure they have an up-to-date Asthma Action Plan. During Asthma Week there is a wide range of free asthma educational activities happening throughout Perth and we hope the community makes good use of this potentially life-saving and life-changing education", he said.

For more information about asthma medications, Asthma Week activities and free community education please phone 9289 3600, or visit www.asthmawa.org.au. To make a donation to the Asthma Foundation of WA to support asthma medical research and asthma education, please contact the Asthma Foundation on the details above.

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