

Asthma Impact Story

Jacob's Story

The Situation

3-year-old Jacob* had experienced several severe asthma attacks and more than one ER visit. To better understand the cause of these attacks, a clinical partner of the Vermont Department of Health's Asthma Program arranged an in-home asthma assessment, which sends an Asthma Educator to review the home for asthma triggers and teach the family about asthma basics.

The following in-home triggers were identified:

- Secondhand smoke
- Pet hair and dander
- Aging carpet
- Dust in the vents
- Rodent droppings
- Stuffed animals
- A live Christmas tree

It was learned that Jacob wasn't taking his medications and inhaler properly and his family had difficulty attending medical appointments.

*Due to the sensitivity of these stories, names have been changed.

What Has Been Done

With the support of the Asthma Educator, Jacob's family made the following environmental changes:

- Rehomed the family's several pets
- Cleaned and vacuumed the heating vents to remove excess dust
- Got a new, clean mattress and pillow cases
- Installed an air purifier
- Removed old stuffed animals

The Asthma Educator also worked one-on-one with Jacob and his family through a series of home visits where they:

- Completed an Asthma Action Plan and shared it with all of Jacob's caretakers
- Created low-stress medication routines for Jacob and his family
- Taught Jacob how to hold his inhaler and feel more comfortable using it; he also received a nebulizer to help him with proper breathing techniques
- Educated Jacob's family and their daycare provider on asthma basics, including how to use the inhaler, plus signs and symptoms of an asthma attack

"Thank you for trying to help make our lives better. It was too stressful to learn [about his asthma] while he was in the hospital."

- Jacob's Mother

For more tips on making your home a safe space from asthma triggers, visit:

HealthVermont.gov/Asthma

You can also talk to your health care provider about Asthma Self-Management Education.