



Asthma Impact Story

Megan's Story

The Situation

6-year-old Megan* was diagnosed with poorly controlled asthma. A clinical partner of the Vermont Department of Health's Asthma Program arranged an at-home asthma assessment and noticed Megan had a severe cough and difficulty breathing. The Asthma Educator referred Megan to a specialist at the University of Vermont Medical Center after noticing a severe cough and difficulty breathing. During her first appointment, the specialist talked with Megan's mother – her primary caregiver – to review the cause of her symptoms.

The following risk factors were identified:

- Secondhand smoke in the home
- Lack of knowledge of asthma basics

Megan's mother also reported feeling somewhat helpless about helping keep her daughter's asthma under control.

What Has Been Done

The UVM Medical Center team and an Asthma Educator worked with Megan and her mom through a series of visits where they:

- Taught asthma basics, so they understood how and why Megan's lungs were reacting so strongly
- Shared the dangers of secondhand smoke and how to identify other triggers that might cause an asthma attack
- Showed the difference between the types of medications, especially the long-term maintenance (or controller) medication to protect the lungs
- Offered support in how to ask family members to smoke away from the home

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

At a follow-up visit, Megan's mother reported feeling empowered about her daughter's asthma, and the specialist was pleased to note significant improvement in Megan's asthma control since her first appointment.

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.