



Asthma Impact Story

Ellie & Drew's Story

The Situation

4-year-old Ellie* and her 12-year-old brother, Drew, have moderate asthma and seasonal allergies. In a single year, the two children experienced several unplanned primary care and ER visits due to asthma-related symptoms, such as shortness of breath with little activity. To better understand the cause of these incidents, a clinical partner of the Vermont Department of Health's Asthma Program sent an Asthma Educator to their home to check for asthma triggers, identify other risk factors, and teach the family about asthma basics.

The following triggers and issues were identified:

- Secondhand smoke
- Dusty furniture
- Incorrect inhaler use

It was also found that the children sleep on sofas in the living room and are in need of dust-proof bedding.

What Has Been Done

With the help of an Asthma Educator, Ellie and Drew's family made the following environmental changes:

- Made a designated smoking area away from home
- Cleaned and vacuumed all furniture
- Got clean mattresses and dust-proof pillow covers

Through a series of at-home visits, the Asthma Educator also helped the family make key behavioral changes:

- Ellie and Drew's mother began a quit smoking attempt
- Both children were taught how to use their inhalers correctly

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

Results from a six-month follow up showed that both children had gone from having “uncontrolled asthma” to “controlled.” The Asthma Educator reported that knowing how to use their inhaler correctly was an important step to improving their condition.

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.