

Mobile Asthma Clinics

When children with asthma don't get their medicines or regular medical care, they miss school and that means they don't learn. UT Health Center's Dr. Mom reports on the difference it makes in the lives of these children when medical care rolls right up to their school.

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that occurs when the main air passages of the lungs become inflamed. The inflammation makes the airways smaller, making it difficult for air to move in and out of the lungs. Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism and the number one reason children go to the emergency room.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that asthma accounts for 14 million missed school days annually. Asthma is the third-ranking cause of hospitalizations among children younger than 15 years; and the estimated cost of treating asthma in children younger than 18 is \$3.2 billion per year.

Asthma Signs and Symptoms:

- Coughing (noticeable with laughing or after exercise)
- Wheezing
- Shortness of Breath
- Chest pain or tightness
- Feeling tired or fatigued
- Must rest after or during activities
- Cannot keep up with other children
- Colds that last longer than ten days
- Missed school days for upper respiratory illnesses
- Waking up during the night from coughing, wheezing or chest tightness

Asthma symptoms make it difficult for children to sleep, exercise, concentrate, thus affecting school performance. Many children do not receive asthma care due to financial problems or transportation problems. A mobile asthma clinic is designed to help these children receive the medical care that is needed to help keep asthma in control with minimal loss of school instruction time.

A team of trained medical staff travels to area schools with a mobile clinic that is specially designed to treat children with asthma. Children have fewer missed hours from school, and parents have fewer missed hours from work.

What happens on a mobile asthma clinic?

- Medical information and history is obtained from the parent or guardian
- A breathing test called a spirometry is performed
- A physical exam is conducted
- Allergy skin testing can be performed
- Asthma education and medication education is provided to parent/guardian and child
- Child can return to the classroom and parent can return to work