

No Preferential Treatment Needed: Asthmatic Children Can Help With Family Chores

Approximately 1 in 12 people in the USA have asthma. Asthma incidence in children under the age of 5 years has increased 92% over the past decade to epidemic proportions of approximately 1 of every 4 children having asthma. In a 2002 ranking, Dallas was 17th and Ft. Worth 11th in the nation for the most number of asthma cases. Chances are you, a neighbor, or family member has a child with asthma.

Asthma is a life-threatening disease and incurable. It is controllable however. Asthma symptoms can be as frightening for the parents and other family members as for the affected child. Because of the severity of symptoms when a child has an asthma episode or attack – the coughing, wheezing, and inability to breath that might even necessitate a trip to the emergency room - many parents give preferential treatment to their asthmatic child. But, with proper treatment that includes eliminating environmental triggers, locating a Board certified specialist, following the proper medication management plan and obtaining disease education, a child with asthma can have an active, full life.

A child with asthma can play sports, gain academic achievement, take vacations, go to camp, pursue hobbies and enjoy normal social past times with friends and family. They don't need to feel isolated or left out of family life because of their disease and that includes doing family chores just like their siblings perform. The answer for an asthmatic child is to divide chores so that the child with asthma does things that won't start or trigger an attack.

Appropriate chores for an asthmatic child include:

Helping to cook meals	Putting clothes away
Setting & clearing the table	Watching younger siblings
Cleaning up the kitchen after meals	Helping shop for groceries
Loading and unloading the dishwasher	Putting groceries away
Sorting laundry	Taking out the trash
Folding laundry	Shining shoes
Washing the car	Picking up & putting things away
Sewing or Mending	

Chores not appropriate for asthmatic children include:

Frying foods that create smoke or strong odors	Brushing or washing pets
Barbecuing or being around a working grill	Cleaning up cat litter
Dusting	Mowing, trimming the grass
Vacuuming	Raking leaves
Sweeping floors	Cleaning an attic
Any cleaning chores requiring the use of strong smelling chemical cleaners like ammonia or bleach	Cleaning garage or storage shed

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