

Having Asthma as an Athlete

By Amy Bentley



Dr. Stanley P. Galant
CHOC Asthma, Allergy and Immunology Specialist

Dr. Galant is the medical director of CHOC Children's Breathmobile, CHOC's mobile asthma treatment van. He is also a clinical professor of pediatrics at UC Irvine. Dr. Galant completed pediatric residencies at Los Angeles Children's Hospital and at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Medical Center. He had a fellowship in allergy/immunology at UCSF and was a medical researcher with the UCSF Medical Center's pediatric radiology department and Cardiovascular Research Institute. The Hospital Association of Southern California named Dr. Galant a 2007 "Hospital Hero" for bringing the Breathmobile to Orange County. Chapter 4 AAP awarded Dr. Galant, Career Achievement of the Year Award in June 2011.

Dr. Galant's philosophy of care for the CHOC Breathmobile program: "Our program is unique and provides access to preventive asthma care in the community. To treat our asthmatic children satisfactorily and manage a chronic disease like asthma, we build trust and bond with our patients."

EDUCATION:

University of California Medical School, San Francisco

BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:

Pediatrics
Allergy/Immunology

6.8 MILLION

APPROXIMATE # OF CHILDREN NATIONWIDE WITH ASTHMA OR 9.3 % (2012)

COULD MY CHILD HAVE ASTHMA?

Asthma occurs when there is an obstruction of the bronchial tubes caused by mucus in the airways, muscle spasm, and swelling that cause three key symptoms: a cough, shortness of breath, and wheezing, says Dr. Stanley P. Galant, CHOC asthma, allergy and immunology specialist. Kids with asthma may experience these symptoms particularly during or after exercise. However, children with asthma who are well managed usually have very little difficulty with exercise.

Asthma can also be triggered by an allergen, an environmental irritant such as tobacco smoke, and by the common cold. "A child should be checked for asthma if he or she regularly experiences these symptoms, particularly with a family history of asthma," says Dr. Galant.

About 20 to 30%

PERCENTAGE OF INNER-CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN ORANGE COUNTY WITH ASTHMA



PLAYING SPORTS WITH ASTHMA

Just because your child has asthma does not mean he or she can't participate in sports or physical activities, says Dr. Galant. In fact, exercise and physical fitness may be very important for lung development, might prevent asthma from occurring, and could improve asthma status in those who have it. During exercise you have to take a deep breath and this can open your airways," says Dr. Galant.

MINIMIZING ASTHMA TROUBLE WHILE EXERCISING

Children participating in sports can take some steps to minimize or avoid asthma trouble. Dr. Galant says kids should warm up first with short exercises such as short sprints. Young athletes with asthma also could use an inhaler, a "rescue medication" such as albuterol, about 15 minutes before exercising or playing sports to help prevent symptoms caused by physical activity, he says, adding that this will help for about 2-4 hours. Young athletes should also have their "rescue medication" on hand too in case they need it. Dr. Galant noted that swimming is a great sport for these children because of the moist environment. Running in dry, cold air is not as ideal. To show that children with asthma can compete on the athletic field we sponsor an Olympic type event each spring called the Air Power Games. If interested please call CHOC Children's Breathmobile at 714-509-7571 or email cbernal@choc.org.

1.8 MILLION

OF VISITS TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IN THE U.S. WITH ASTHMA AS THE PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS



Emergency Care Just for Kids

The Julia and George Argyros Emergency Department at CHOC Children's Hospital is exclusively dedicated to the treatment of pediatric patients. Our 22,000-square-foot, full-service emergency department is designed to meet the unique medical and emotional needs of children—from fragile newborns to sturdy teens. Our board-certified emergency medicine physicians and our specially trained nurses provide the very best patient- and family-centered care 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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