



UVA Offers First-of-Its-Kind Breath Test for Asthma

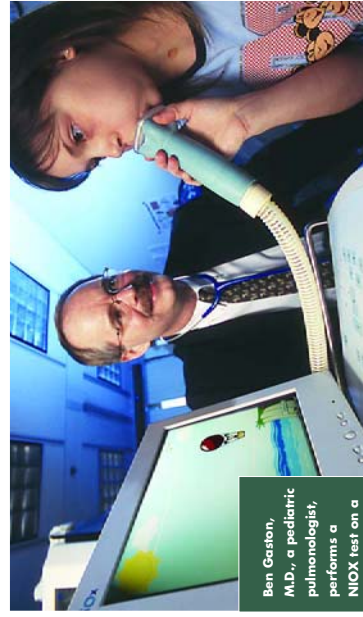
UVA Health System offers

- a recently FDA-approved asthma test that measures for the first time not how much but what a person breathes out. This test helps physicians confirm an asthma diagnosis and better manage patients who have difficult-to-control asthma.

Called the NIOX Nitric Oxide Test System and made by Aerocrine AB of Sweden, this non-invasive test measures the amount of exhaled nitric oxide. Asthmatics often have higher than normal levels of NO. Very high levels can be a warning sign that a person is susceptible to an asthma attack and may need to take medication even if they have no symptoms.

"This test is an additional tool we have to help come up with the best treatment strategy for patients with asthma," says Ben Gaston, M.D., a UVA pediatric pulmonologist and researcher. He helped discover the connection between NO levels and lung diseases that laid the foundation for the NIOX test's development and helped make UVA one of the nation's only places for measuring exhaled biomarkers for pediatric lung diseases.

"We have found that nitric oxide is often a better marker of inflammation in the airways than a spirometer and is particularly effective



Ben Gaston, M.D., a pediatric pulmonologist, performs a NIOX test on a child. The nitric-oxide-detecting test gives pulmonologists key information to help them better manage patients with difficult-to-control asthma and other lung diseases.

for monitoring allergic asthma," Gaston said. "The NIOX test helps tell us whether a child is getting too much medicine or not enough medicine or whether they may be susceptible to an asthma attack."

During the 5-minute test, a child as young as 3 breathes into a tube while watching a video game. The object of the "game" is to blow hard enough to get a little girl in a balloon to take flight, while a sophisticated computer system measures the nitric oxide exhaled into the tube.

The test is also useful in helping to rule out other conditions that have asthma-like symptoms and for managing lung diseases marked by low levels of NO, including cystic fibrosis and immotile cilia syndrome (ICS).

UVA offers the test at its Pediatric Clinic in the UVA Primary Care Center. Adults are wel-

come to take the test as well. Gaston hopes some day a version of the test may be available in most doctor offices and even in people's homes. "But right now," he said, "the equipment is expensive and takes a lot of training to get it calibrated, so we're happy to have the expertise to offer it to the region now."

Some patients may need to come in once for the test to confirm an asthma diagnosis and determine medication doses. Other patients may benefit from taking the test monthly.

"Pediatricians around here are terrific in managing asthma," Gaston notes. "We try to work closely with the family and referring physician so in one visit we can answer any questions and come up with a treatment plan. And if a physician is treating someone with severe asthma, we can offer their patient the test on a regular basis."

To refer a patient to a UVA pediatric pulmonary specialist, call 434-924-5321 or toll-free 800-552-3723.

Accreditations:

- The University of Virginia School of Medicine is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

Specific information about the designated number of AMA Category 1 hours for conferences can be obtained by calling 434-924-5310.

UVA HEALTH SYSTEM CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION

Fall 2004 Conferences

BIODEFENSE SYMPOSIUM
Jordan Hall Conference Center
September 9-10

CONTRAST ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY MINI-FELLOWSHIP
Jordan Hall Conference Center
September 13-16

THE 5TH ADVANCES IN COMPREHENSIVE BREAST CARE
Jordan Hall Conference Center
September 18

PRACTICAL CRITICAL CARE: A CASE-BASED APPROACH TO NEUROLOGICAL AND GENERAL CRITICAL CARE
Jordan Hall Conference Center
September 23-24

THE 3RD ADVANCES IN FAMILY MEDICINE
Jordan Hall Conference Center
September 30-October 2

UVA OTOLARYNGOLOGY CONFERENCE - THE NOSE: INSIDE AND OUT
Jordan Hall Conference Center
October 6-9

THE 17TH ANNUAL POSTGRADUATE COURSE: ADVANCES IN CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICINE
Boar's Head Inn
October 8-9

THE 4TH ANNUAL TEEN CULTURE CONFERENCE
Omni Hotel
October 11

THE 2ND ANNUAL UVA ORTHOPAEDIC SUBSPECIALTY MEETING: TOTAL JOINT REPLACEMENT
Jordan Hall Conference Center
October 21-23

THE 31ST RECENT ADVANCES IN MEDICINE
Omni Hotel
October 27-29

All seminars offered in Charlottesville, Virginia, unless otherwise noted.

For updates and further information, please call 434-924-5310 or write to Continuing Medical Education, P.O. Box 800711, Charlottesville, VA 22908-0711. You can also check our Web site on the UVA Health System Web page: www.cmevillage.com.

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