



The “Linköping model” will now be documented by the Swedish Asthma and Allergy Association. We will also try to evaluate our activities to find out if this kind of patient training leads to better quality of life and better health for the children and youths who take part in the camp.

We hope that this model will inspire other county associations in Sweden to set up similar camps. The evaluation and documentation will take the form of a project financed by Arvsfonden (The Swedish Inheritance Fund).

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## Asthma courses in Sweden eight-day camp

### Since 1981

Since 1981 the Swedish Asthma and Allergy Association in Linköping has organised an eight-day camp for children aged 8 to 15. All of the camp participants are selected by the local health authorities and accompanied by one of their parents for the entire stay.

### The goal of the camp

The goal of the camp is to provide participants who have asthma and allergies with an opportunity for physical activity and to improve their knowledge of their illness, all in a positive environment and under expert guidance.



### The camp

The camp is financed mainly through a number of funds and foundations that the association applies for money from. We have also managed to involve a couple of companies who sponsor our activities in various ways.

Each participant pays around 300 euros for a week's stay in Idre. This includes all meals, lodging, ski hire and lift ticket.

The camp takes place in Idre in the north of Sweden.

In the mornings the children go cross-country skiing with their parents and after lunch they go downhill skiing. In the late afternoons and evenings the children and parents attend different classes about asthma and allergies.

The asthma course teaches camp participants about their disease and how to take care of themselves properly in

order to feel as healthy as possible. Spending time with people who have similar disorders creates a spirit of fellowship which goes a long way to improving the participants' quality of life.

Most families come back for another year or two.



### Medical staff

Access to medical staff is a great source of security for the participants. The medical team consists of a doctor, a nurse and a physiotherapist.

### Some of the results we have achieved:

- All the family members learned more about asthma
- We have been able to periodically lower children's medication by a third
- The children have gained in confidence

### A medical study

Finally we would like to mention a Swedish study by Carl-Axel Hederos, chief physician at the children's clinic in Karlstad, Sweden. "Asthma in young children: Epidemiology, burden of asthma and effects of a parental information program."

Hederos followed children aged 2 to 6 with newly diagnosed asthma for a number of years. We know from experience that parents can find it hard to take in and follow doctors' advice. The study shows that parents who took part in group discussions with paediatricians and other parents were better at following

doctors' advice 18 months later.

Their children had a quarter as many sick days as the children in the control group. When a follow-up was performed after six years, the children had less frequent contact with healthcare services and their parents had a better quality of life compared to the children and parents in the control group.

