

WMBF Channel 32 – NBC

Asthma in kids, new way to treat it

Posted: Mar 18, 2011 3:51 PM EDT Friday, March 18, 2011 3:51 PM EST Updated: Mar 18, 2011 3:51 PM EDT Friday, March 18, 2011 3:51 PM EST

_MYRTLE BEACH, SC (WMBF) Nothing is worse than watching your child get sick. This time of year, asthma can be a really big issues in your house. A new study finds the drug Xolair greatly reduces asthma symptoms and attacks among some children.

Researchers from Boston University School of Medicine tested the drug over a one year period on more than 400 inner city kids with persistent asthma.

Xolair reduced symptoms by a quarter and asthma attacks by 30 percent and lessened the need for inhaled steroids in most children.

Myrtle Beach allergist Dr. Mark Schecker said he's used it for patients 12 and up for about eight years – so he's interested to see if he'll be able to prescribe it to his young patients too.

"Right now there are concerns about the drug in terms of possible side effects," Schecker said. "It can cause anaphylaxis, there are concerns over certain kinds of cancer links and links to heart disease. Things that haven't been flushed out. So I think the FDA is reluctant to approve it for kids under the age of 12 because of some of these concerns."

Here's how it works – you take an injection of Xolair every two to four weeks. But it doesn't come cheap. Schecker said the treatment can cost \$1000 a month. However, he said it is usually covered by insurance and the maker helps in-need patients too.