



January 2010 Edition



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Sunlight allergy of David, ten

The Sun Dec 18 2009- BRAVE schoolboy David Middleton has to wear a special "space suit" every day — because of a unique allergy to the sun.

The ten-year-old is forced to don an astronaut-style helmet, a protective rash-vest and gloves whenever he goes outside during daylight. He suffers from what is believed a world-first variant of Xeroderma Pigmentosum — a genetic condition where the skin does not heal from the effects of UV light.

Because of an extreme sensitivity to the sun's rays he suffers blistered burns after just a few minutes in direct sunlight. He has to have factor 50 sun cream applied every two hours — even indoors — for the rest of his life.

David lives with his mum Kate Middleton, 31, stepdad John Middleton, 50, and his sister Charlotte, 13, in Bromsgrove, Worcs. The windows of their house even have to be coated with a special UV protective film called Dermaguard — the material used in art galleries to protect paintings from sunlight.

And the tank housing the family's pet tortoises has also been coated with the film to block out any harmful UV rays from its heater. John, a paramedic, said David refuses to let his condition get in the way of his life and was just like a normal boy of his age.

Asthma no barrier for David Beckham

Globe and Mail Dec 3 2009-

The stakes were high in the MLS cup final last week as the Los Angeles Galaxy's golden boy, David Beckham, tore back and



forth across the wide field trying — in vain — for a win.

As he sat on the bench at half time, the winded 34-year-old soccer star pulled out a puffer and pumped pressurized medication into his airways — unknowingly in the sightline of a photographer.

After the match, he was outed as an asthmatic, much to the surprise of fellow players and fans.

It has since been revealed that Mr. Beckham has had mild asthma since he was a child. He likely kept it under wraps due to public misconceptions about the illness.

The belief that asthma can hinder physical performance has prompted many athletes, including retired NHL star Gary Roberts, to hide the illness through most of their careers. But doctors say asthmatics can handle even the most gruelling of workouts if they take proper medication. "Having exercise-induced asthma symptoms is an indicator of poor asthma control," explains Sharon Dell, a respiratory specialist at Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto.

If asthmatics take on strenuous physical activity but skip medication, they can cause serious damage to their lungs, she says. But combining regular doses of medicine with exercise can actually strengthen them.

Retired speed skater Susan Auch, who now lives in Calgary, might never have won her three Olympic medals had it not been for her asthma.

When she was diagnosed with the illness as a toddler, her parents were told that vigorous physical activity would help her develop strong, healthy lungs, and that's why they pushed her into many sports.

Ms. Auch still remembers the 1995 World Cup in Davos, Switzerland, when she had a cold, which had already made breathing difficult.