

HOW BEES HELP MY SON BREATHE

■ Phillip Robinson may be asthmatic, but he buzzes around like any healthy youngster - thanks to pure propolis, a tree resin honey bees collect to build their hives.

"Phillip hasn't had an attack since I started giving him pure propolis," says mum Elaine, 38, from Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear. "As a baby, he was prone to colds and chesty infections and had breathing problems. He was diagnosed as asthmatic at three-and-a-half. We were told he'd have to use an inhaler for the rest of his life. He had steroid treatment, too.

"The next year, on holiday, we visited Bee Health's bee farm and I read a leaflet about pure propolis. I began giving it to him every day. After three months, there was a big improvement and after six months he had no further full-blown asthma attacks. He's had no other treatment since.

"Phillip doesn't even need pure propolis all the time now. I tend to give him it if I see a cold coming on."

Phillip Robinson suffers from asthma but he can run and play like any other eight-year-old - thanks to honey bees. Sandra Hogben reports



One of the lucky ones - Phillip's wheezing days are over

ASTHMA FACT-FILE

Six children are admitted to hospital every hour in the UK as this killer illness spreads due to pollution and food additives. There are about nine million sufferers, but fewer people die from it now. Infections.

SYMPTOMS

Attacks happen when the lungs' bronchial tubes contract, creating a sticky mucus that makes breathing hard and wheezy. Other symptoms include a tight chest, coughing and a fast pulse. In serious cases, sufferers may feel panicky and turn blue in the face. Fortunately, childhood or adolescent asthma often disappears after a year or two.

TRIGGERS

Attacks can be brought on by cigarette smoke, pollution, cold weather, viruses, strenuous exercise, stress and allergies.

TREATMENT

Cortisone and other drugs, often in inhalers, control asthma - these reduce inflammation and dilate airways. Antibiotics are used for