OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Smith

Household Asthma Triggers



Dr. Smith wants patients to know about startling research that shows that using spray cleaners and air fresheners, as little as once per week, may spark asthma. The landmark study, published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine, is the first to focus exclusively on asthma triggered by products consumers use in their households on a regular basis.

"The relative risk rates of developing adult asthma in relation to exposure to cleaning products could account for as much as 15 percent, or one in seven of adult asthma cases," noted the researchers (Am J Respir Crit Care Med 2007;176:735-41).

Researchers enrolled more than 3,500 patients from 10 European countries — two-thirds of whom were women — in the study. Spray cleaners investigated included products for furniture and glass.

Whether the spray cleaners featured aerosol or pump activation was not noted. Dr. Smith, however, points out that both methods propel content droplets into the air. Consumers, in turn, inhale these droplets into their lungs.

Dr. Smith is concerned about the increasing number of household irritants that can spark asthma. Fortunately, there *is* something you can do about it! By learning to identify common irritants, you can help ward off respiratory distress for you and your family.



Chlorine Bleach

After reviewing the medical records of 160 domestic cleaning women, researchers in Spain concluded that the women's asthma symptoms were directly linked to their exposure to bleach and similarly irritating cleaning agents. "The public health impact of the use of irritant cleaning products could be widespread since the use of these products is common both in the workplace and at home." (*Occup Environ Med* 2005;62:598-606.)

Own a dishwasher? Then you may be exposing yourself and your family to chlorine fumes. That's because many automatic dishwasher detergents contain dry chlorine that is activated when it encounters water in the dishwasher. Clouds of chlorine fumes are then released in the steam that leaks out of the dishwasher.

Ammonia

In a study of 332 nurses and other health-care professionals, researchers observed that those who used ammonia and/or bleach experienced increased risks of new-onset asthma (*Occup Environ Med* 2007;64:474-9).

Also to Avoid

Look for organic or less-toxic formulations of the following:

Toilet bowl cleaners —
Contain chlorine and other lung-irritating chemicals.

Carpet cleaners —
Particularly toxic to children.

Dryer sheets —
Chemical ingredients include chloroform.

Laundry detergents —
Contain ammonia.

Prenatal Warning

Did you know that the frequent use of chemically based products in the prenatal period is associated with persistent wheezing in young children? That's the conclusion researchers made based on a survey of women who recorded how frequently they used 11 chemical-based domestic products during their pregnancy (*Thorax* 2005;60:45-9).

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Children born to women who eat apples during pregnancy, however, have a significantly *decreased* risk of asthma and wheezing. These findings are from a study that tracked the dietary intake of 1,253 mother-child pairs over a five-year period. The only other positive association between prenatal diet and the risk reduction of asthma in children? Mom's consumption of omega-3 rich fish (*Thorax* 2007;62:772-8).

Off-Gassing Triggers

Household chemicals aren't restricted to just cleaning products. They can also lurk in everyday items: even that adorable new lamp in the baby's bedroom.

For the last few weeks, your little one has had a slight cough. In fact, the longer the baby is in his room, the worse the cough gets. Ironically, the cough and the arrival of the lamp occurred at the same time. Coincidence? Maybe. But it's just as likely that the instigator is actually the fumes off-gassing from the lamp's synthetic shade.

In Taiwan, a study of 2,290 fifth graders found that exposure to chemical vapors was significantly associated with all *seven* respiratory symptoms considered in the study — including exercise-induced coughing (*J Asthma* 2006;43:355-61).

Even new furniture and painted walls can spark asthma.

Among 96 homes in Quebec City, Canada, researchers identified high concentrations of formaldehyde in homes with new wooden or melamine furniture purchased in the previous 12 months, "and in those where painting or varnishing had been done in the sampled room in the previous twelve months." (*Environ Res* 2006;102:1-8.)

The good news? The same researchers say that "increasing air change rates in homes could reduce exposure to this compound."

Computer Printers

Whether you work from home, or simply have a room set aside for paying bills and surfing the Internet, chances are you own at least one computer and printer. And, if you are like countless families, your children have their own computers and printers: most likely in their bedrooms.

But did you know that your printer — just like the chemically based cleaning supplies mentioned in this ***Optimal Health University***® handout — may also spark asthma and respiratory problems?

According to the results of one study, Australian researchers found that 40 percent of the 62 office printers they tested released high levels of ultra-fine particles into the air. These particles, like those found in cigarette smoke, are subsequently inhaled into the lungs (*Environ Sci Technol* 2007;41:6039).

Toner coverage — in this case, more is *not* better — and cartridge age influenced the amount of particles released into the air. Using printers in well-ventilated areas, however, can reduce the amount of free-floating particles and leave you breathing easier.

Chiropractic and Respiratory Function

In addition to reducing household chemicals, you can also boost lung function with regularly scheduled chiropractic care.

An Australian study explored the effect of combining chiropractic manual therapy with exercise on respiratory function in 20 healthy, nonsmoking individuals. The results showed that "manual therapy appears to increase the respiratory function of normal individuals." What's more, this type of intervention — administered before exercise — may allow patients to exercise longer because of their boosted respiratory system (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2007;30:509-13).

The connection? Misaligned vertebrae and ribs may restrict lung function and impede breathing. Doctors of chiropractic use safe and gentle maneuvers known as ***chiropractic adjustments*** to restore misaligned spinal bones (vertebrae): a common condition known as ***vertebral subluxation***.

Talk to Your Chiropractor

If you or someone in your family is having occasional bouts of respiratory distress, schedule an appointment with your doctor *today* for a complete chiropractic checkup.

Don't wait until a full-fledged asthma attack leaves you, or a loved one, breathless.



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