Babies Exposed to Household Cleaning Products More Likely to Develop Asthma

Culprits include detergents, disinfectants, polishes and air fresheners..

February 20, 2020 By Alicia Green

Asthma affects children more than any other chronic disease. Now, new findings published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal by researchers at Simon Fraser University (SFU) suggest that infants who are regularly exposed to household cleaning products face a higher risk of developing asthma by age 3.

Scientists reviewed data from 2,022 children who participated in the CHILD Cohort Study, an investigation tracking nearly 3,500 Canadian infants and their families to help ascertain the root causes of chronic diseases such as asthma, allergies and obesity.

Researchers evaluated children's daily, weekly and monthly exposure to 26 types of household cleaning products, including dishwashing and laundry detergents, disinfectants, polishes and air fresheners.

Results showed that 3-year-old kids who lived in homes where cleaning products were regularly used during their infancy (from birth to 3 months) were more likely to develop a recurrent wheeze, a recurrent wheeze with a heightened immune response to common allergens and asthma. (At age 3, there was a stronger relationship between product exposure and respiratory difficulties among girls, compared with boys.)

In addition, chronic wheezing and asthma were also more common in homes where liquid or solid air fresheners, plug-in deodorizers, dusting sprays, antimicrobial hand sanitizers and oven cleaners were frequently used.

This is why "it may be important for people to consider removing scented spray cleaning products from their cleaning routine," said Jaclyn Parks, a graduate student in the Faculty of Health Sciences at SFU, and the paper's lead author.

"The big takeaway from this study is that the first few months of life are critical for the development of a baby's immune and respiratory systems," Parks added. "By identifying

hazardous exposures during infancy, preventive measures can be taken to potentially reduce childhood asthma and subsequent allergy risk."

Researchers proposed that chemicals in these cleaning products damage the cells that line the respiratory tract through the body's built-in inflammatory pathways.

For related coverage, read "Ordinary Household Goods Linked to Depressed Thyroid in Young Girls."

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/babies-exposed-household-cleaning-products-likely-develop-asthma