

*Scientific Studies:****Household Chemicals Contribute to Asthma***

**“Common household cleaning chemicals contribute to childhood asthma.”**

Higher domestic chemical exposure during pregnancy may be associated with persistent wheeze and lung function abnormalities in infants and children, according to a study conducted at the University of Bristol, UK.

Researchers determined a maternal composite household chemical exposure (CHCE) score for a group of subjects. Lung function and self-reported wheezing were used to compare subjects with varying CHCE scores.

Higher maternal composite household chemical exposure (CHCE) scores were correlated with onset of persistent wheezing in children. This may provide evidence that common household cleaning chemicals contribute to childhood asthma.

Researchers believe this results from prenatal developmental and/or postnatal irritant effects of household chemicals on the developing airway.

This study provides some evidence to support switching to more natural cleaners such as baking soda, vinegar, and peroxide.

Baking soda is edible, yet it is an excellent

replacement for laundry soap, scouring powder, and can even be mixed with water to make a spray cleaner.

White vinegar not only softens fabrics, but also deodorizes. A small amount diluted in a spray bottle makes an excellent air freshener that does not merely cover up odors like fragranced air fresheners do.

Peroxide has many uses, including cleaning and bleaching. It is especially useful to bleach cutting boards and laundry. Applied immediately after cleaning with vinegar, some believe the combination kills more germs than bleach. Yet, it's safe enough to use as a mouth rinse and first aid antiseptic.

Cleaning is the removing of dirt and dust. Generally all that requires is vacuuming, sweeping, mopping with water, and wiping things down. The chemicals are often unnecessary and even harmful, as this study shows. Most chemicals simply add fragrance and harsh cleaning power, which is not necessary for ordinary household maintenance. As asthma rates soar, we must look to safer cleaning.

**Reference**

Henderson J, Sherriff A, Farrow A, Ayres JG. Household chemicals, persistent wheezing and lung function: Effect modification by atopy? *Eur Respir J.* 2007 Oct 24; [Epub ahead of print]

