

Scientific Study

Asthma May Be Linked to Toxic Exposures



According to researchers, there may be a noteworthy relationship between asthma and chemical sensitivity.

Equal percentages of the population suffer from allergies and chemical sensitivity as separate illnesses. A survey showed that 13% of the population suffers from asthma while another 12% suffers from chemical sensitivity. Both conditions affect racial groups equally.

Over a third of asthmatics also report symptoms of chemical sensitivity, with 38% suffering ill effects from scented products, such as perfumes, air fresheners, and other fragrances.

More than 1 in 10 asthmatics also say their asthma was caused by an exposure to a toxic substance.

Every day, Americans are exposed to a farrago of toxic substances found in the air, food, water, and consumer products. Some of these toxic substances are known toxins such as pesticides and industrial pollution. Others are hidden in commonly used products, such as fragrances.

Fragrances are added to cleaners (laundry soap, glass cleaner, all purpose cleaner, etc.), personal care products (soap, shampoo, lotion, after shave, etc), laundry detergent, air fresheners, and many others.

Fragrance companies do not disclose the ingredients used to create their scent under trade secret laws; however, tests have shown that a fragrance may contain as many as 5,000 toxic chemicals. Several of the chemicals discovered are classified as hazardous waste by the Environmental Protection Agency and less than 20% have actually been tested for human safety.

Fragrance is ubiquitous in the environment, yet it is listed a primary trigger for both asthmatics and the chemically sensitive.

Toxic chemicals are capable of damaging body tissues, impairing enzyme function, weakening the immune system, initiating brain swelling, and causing genetic alterations that impair normal liver detoxification. People injured in this way often become less able to eliminate the chemical loads placed on them in day-to-day living.

Asthma is one result of this toxic onslaught. Chemical sensitivity is another. Other studies have correlated cancer, autism, and many other modern diseases and disorders to toxic exposure.

Chemicals which have been tested have only been tested individually and scientists do not yet understand the complex interactions which occur when chemicals with similar or opposite properties are mixed with one another in the environment. Neither do scientists understand how these complex mixtures affect human health.

Reference

Caress SM, Steinemann AC. Asthma and chemical hypersensitivity: prevalence, etiology, and age of onset. *Toxicol Ind Health*. 2009 Feb;25(1):71-8.