

## THE ALLERGY & ASTHMA CLINIC

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NEWSLETTER

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### Household Stress Boosts Asthma Risk

Youngsters with stressed-out parents and exposure to air pollution have a higher risk of asthma, according to the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The combination of stress plus pollution appears to be more toxic than either alone.

In the United States, about 22 million people -- including 6 million children -- have asthma. City dwelling children have a much higher risk of developing asthma than their peers living elsewhere. Children with stressed-out parents who lived around high levels of traffic related pollution were at a much higher risk of developing asthma than children without stressed parents. Parents were considered stressed if they said their lives were

unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overwhelming. Air pollutants can cause an inflammatory response in the airways, which is a primary feature of asthma. Stress may increase a person's susceptibility to air pollutants by lowering immune system function or affecting the autonomic nervous system, which helps regulate breathing. What's more, parental stress also seemed to exacerbate the effect of maternal smoking during pregnancy. Children who had stressed-out parents and were exposed to cigarette smoke during pregnancy were also much more likely to develop asthma than children exposed to cigarette smoke alone.

The experts' advice? If allergies run in your family, be on the look out for asthma in your

children and get their allergies properly diagnosed and treated. Medical treatment has never been better.

"If you think your child may be predisposed to asthma, don't live near a freeway; if you do live near a freeway, get on top of your stress and look at stress management programs and/or moving."

"Go green where you can. Use a home air cleaner to remove small particles that are in the air. You may not be able to control the outdoor air quality on your own, but you can try and control your indoor air quality by banning smoking inside the house and choosing green cleaning products, which do not contain harsh chemicals that can affect indoor air quality."

Questions? Please contact us, we're here to help you and your family feel your best.