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From [The Times](#) October 13, 2007

Household sprays 'linked to one in seven cases of asthma'

[Lewis Smith](#) Environment Reporter

Using cleaning sprays and air fresheners while doing housework could account for up to one in seven cases of asthma in adults, a study has found.

The modern penchant for using labour-saving cleaning sprays and air fresheners has been found to raise significantly the risk of symptoms.

Just spraying a cleaner once a week can trigger an attack, according to the research. The risk rose the more that the sprays were used.

“Frequent use of household cleaning sprays may be an important risk factor for adult asthma,” said Jan-Paul Zock, of the Municipal Institute of Medical Research, in Barcelona.

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Stuttaford
Asthma risks 'double' during menopause
much as 15 per cent, or one in seven, of adult asthma cases."

Furniture sprays, glass-cleaners and air freshener sprays were associated with

the highest risk of a person developing asthma after doing the housework. No link was identified between the onset of asthma and the use of cleaning products that were not sprayed.

Cleaning sprays have previously been found to be associated with an increased incidence of asthma among people who clean for a living but it is thought to be the first time the link has been made to everyday use.

Howard Stoate, a GP, MP and chairman of the asthma all-party parliamentary group, said that a link between chemicals and asthma has long been suspected.

He hoped that it might explain why countries such as New Zealand, which have low air pollution levels, have increases in asthma levels.

"There are a lot of gaps in our knowledge about asthma. Anything that fills those has to be welcomed. Although asthma is on the increase worldwide no one can say why," he said.

Asthma UK, a charity dedicated to helping the 5.2 million asthma patients in Britain, said that it was particularly interested in the finding that people without asthma go on to develop it after using the sprays.

"This report . . . highlights significant findings regarding the link between asthma and the use of spray cleaning products in the home," Victoria King, of Asthma UK, said. "Although further research is needed, we do already know that air fresheners and bleach trigger symptoms in people who already have asthma."

The international study involved 3,503 people aged 20 to 44 in ten European countries who used cleaning and air freshener sprays. Their details were first logged, on average, nine years before they were interviewed by the study team.

Two-thirds were women but only 9 per cent were, at the end of the survey period, looking after the home full time.

It was found that 6 per cent of the subjects had developed asthma symptoms and that there was a link between the disease and using sprays in the home at least once a week.

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Analysis revealed that using the sprays at least once a week, as 42 per cent of the study group did, increased the risk of asthma symptoms by 30 to 50 per cent.

The study team reported: "Consistently positive associations for most asthma definitions were observed for cleaning sprays in general, and glass-cleaning, furniture and air-refreshing sprays in particular."

Cleaning sprays and air fresheners contain chemicals such as ammonia, chlorine-releasing agents and sodium hydroxide. Researchers suggested that the chemicals being released into the air in spray form significantly increased their exposure to people.

The results of the study were published in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, by the American Thoracic Society. The researchers used data from the European Community Respiratory Health Survey, one of the largest epidemiologic studies of airway disease in the world.

A spokesman for the UK Cleaning Products Industry Association said: "The safety of consumers is the highest priority of our industries and the safety of our products is regularly checked and subject to rigorous controls, as well as stringent European legislation."

I'm 52 and have just been diagnosed with asthma. Coughing, always coughing is what drove me to the doctor. I was surprised. I am a homemaker and do use cleaners, although I've always known that spraying any chemical can't be good. I have tried to use alternatives, however, I guess I wasn't careful enough.

Kathy, Vancouver, WA, USA

I do have asthma, so my symptoms are greatly exacerbated if I use these types of products. I have to be extremely careful what types of scented products I buy...and that goes for candles, eau de toilette, laundry detergent and fabric softener.

Anna Marie, Ipswich, USA/Massachusetts

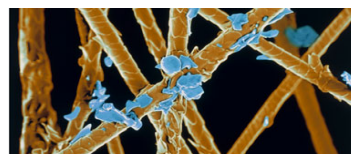
Can the authors clarify if the sprays are from metal aerosol cans or plastic pump spray bottle products or both?

John, NORTHEAST OHIO, USA

I cant stand my wifes hair spray. wont let her use it around me.

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