

The Truth  *About Health*

ANTIBIOTICS & CHILDHOOD ASTHMA

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A new study just published in the Journal of Clinical and Experimental Allergy has added fuel to the concern over the indiscriminate use of antibiotics. It has also begun to address the recent concern of scientists about the increasing occurrence of childhood asthma. U.S. Researchers surveyed parents of 612 children in six New Zealand schools.

The study looked at the odds ratio (risk) of children experiencing asthma symptoms based upon if, when, and how often they had taken antibiotics. The most decisive factors were when (before or after the first year of life) and how often. The results are quite sobering.

A child given antibiotics during the first year of life has an odds ratio of 4.05, which means the child is over four times more likely to develop asthma symptoms than the child who has never taken antibiotics.

So, now childhood asthma is added to the list of potential hazards to taking antibiotics. This, along with the increase in antibiotic resistance, should cause patients to think twice about taking antibiotics, particularly where not specifically required. Parents should be made aware of this potential risk.

Broad-spectrum antibiotics came into clinical usage in the 1960s, and their increased use coincides with the time trends for the increasing prevalence of asthma. Julian Crane, Associate Professor at Otago University and one of the study's investigators concludes, "Much more work needs to be done to check out whether this effect is causal, and if so, what are the immunological processes that cause it."

SOURCE: Dynamic Chiropractic online/ www.chiroweb.com, August 1999.