

Smoking mums risk babies' lungs

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The number of children diagnosed with asthma is on the increase. It is thought that one of the causes of asthma is exposure to cigarette smoke while in the uterus and exposure to passive smoking in childhood. A recently completed Norwegian study of 3000 people has confirmed this.

The researchers found that maternal smoking was associated with asthma, an increase in phlegm, breathlessness, chronic cough and wheezing in their children. More than 17 percent of adult-onset asthma was directly caused by maternal smoking and 9.3 percent was caused by exposure to passive smoking by other cigarette smoking household members.

The researchers commented that exposure to prenatal and postnatal smoking dramatically increases the risk for developing adult asthma and other respiratory complaints. They state that almost a quarter of adult asthma could be prevented if children were not exposed to tobacco smoke.

1Professor Peter Sly, head of clinical sciences at the Western Australian Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and professor of paediatrics at the University of West Australia, said "the findings were alarming, and should be a wake-up call for young female smokers. They are not just harming themselves but having long-lasting, probably life-long, effects on their children." 2

REFERENCES:

1. Skorge TD et al. The adult incidence of asthma and respiratory symptoms by passive smoking in utero or in childhood. *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* 2005;175:61-6
2. Saunders C. Smoking mums a smoking gun for adult asthma. *Australian Doctor* 8 July 2005:2

[Sighted on "Blackmores The Best of Health" Website]