

## Mold linked to asthma

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A Cardiff University study has found that removing indoor mold improves the symptoms of people with asthma.

Asthma UK figures show the prevalence of asthma in Wales is among the highest in the world, with 260,000 people receiving treatment for their asthma with the rate of hospital admissions for adults 12 per cent more than anywhere else in the UK.

Researchers in the School of Medicine asked patients with asthma living in two areas of South Wales if they noticed mold growing inside their houses which was then confirmed by a trained observer. In half of the houses with mold (chosen at random), the mold was removed (using a fungicidal wash to kill any remaining mold) and ventilation was improved by means of a fan in the loft. In the other houses, mold removal was delayed for twelve months.

Dr Michael Burr, School of Medicine's Department of Primary Care and Public Health said: "In the houses where mold was removed, the symptoms of asthma improved and the use of inhalers decreased more than in the other houses. Removing mold also led to improvements in other symptoms: sneezing, runny or blocked noses, and itchy-watery eyes.

"There was no clear effect on measurements of breathing, but this may have been because patients used their inhalers as needed so that they could always breathe freely."

Jenny Versnel, Asthma UK's Executive Director of Research and Policy said: "The publication of this study adds to the increasing bank of research that indoor mold may have a link with asthma, however more work is needed in this area before definitive conclusions can be drawn.

"Research into this area does, however, highlight the importance of keeping your house dry and well ventilated. This can reduce exposure to certain asthma triggers such as mold spores which are found in damp places."

Source: Cardiff University

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