

# Asthma symptoms linked to increased stress, anxiety levels in teens

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A Henry Ford Hospital study has found that common asthma symptoms like waking up in the middle of the night and shortness of breath are associated with increased levels of stress and anxiety in teens with asthma.

In a small study of 38 asthma patients ages 14-17, researchers found that their average scores for [stress](#) and anxiety levels were higher than those seen in the general population.

Researchers suggest the findings are a red flag for physicians of young asthma patients.

"Because these patients may be particularly vulnerable to stress and anxiety, this information can be helpful to physicians as they counsel

their patients about the importance of managing their asthma," says Cathryn Luria, M.D., a Henry Ford fellow and the study's lead author.

"While we found a link between [asthma symptoms](#) and stress and anxiety, it's not clear which came first - the symptoms or the stress and anxiety. More study is needed to determine that."

The study is being presented at the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology's annual meeting.

Asthma affects an estimated 25.7 million people, including 7 million children ages 18 and under, according to the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention. While the cause of asthma is unknown, most people can control their symptoms with medication.

While emotional disorders like anxiety are associated with people with asthma, Dr. Luria and researchers sought to evaluate that association in a more defined patient population like adolescents. Data was collected from well-child visits and a questionnaire completed by the teens. Key findings:

- Waking up with symptoms, waking up in the middle of the night, activity limitations and shortness of breath were asthma symptoms linked to increased stress levels.
- Waking up with symptoms and waking up in the middle of the night were [asthma](#) symptoms linked to increased [anxiety](#) levels.

Provided by Henry Ford Health System

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