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Tara Parker-Pope on Health



## Asthma Attacks Linked With Weather

By [Tara Parker-Pope](#)

Many patients with asthma know that their illness can vary with the seasons. But a new study suggests that it's not just pollen counts or cold weather that can trigger an asthma attack, but any change in temperature or humidity.

Doctors at the Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit reviewed emergency room visits due to asthma during 2004 and 2005. They matched the data with climate records for temperature, humidity, barometric pressure and airborne allergens.

The study of 25,000 children showed that in addition to factors like pollution and pollen counts, temperature and humidity changes also were linked to emergency room visits related to asthma. The study authors noted that many patients are well aware that weather fluctuations influence their asthma symptoms, but this is the first study to document the effect. In addition, it wasn't just cold weather that triggered asthma problems but temperature increases as well. The research is published in the September issue of *The Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology*.

The study shows that people with allergies and asthma need to be vigilant about controlling their symptoms regardless of the season, said Dr. Richard G. Gower, president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

"It's been long known that in people with asthma who aren't controlled, just swallowing cold or hot liquids can set off an asthma attack," Dr. Gower said. "The temperature sets off a bronchial spasm. We know that a change in temperature, down or up, can set it off."