Childhood Allergies Could Raise the Risk of Heart Disease

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Hay fever, asthma and eczema can be hard on any kid, but health researchers say the real threat posed by these chronic allergies may strike youngsters later in life. New findings published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology show childhood allergies may also raise kids' risk of heart disease in adulthood, reports Science Daily.

For the study, researchers at Northwestern University reviewed health data from the National Health Interview Survey of more than 13,000 children ages 17 and younger. Scientists found that kids diagnosed with allergies had almost twice the rates of hypertension and high cholesterol than kids without these health issues. What's more, researchers noted that even when the study controlled for obesity, children with allergies suffered a higher risk of heart-related diseases.

Scientists said allergies can drive kids' future heart problems in several ways: Children with allergies tend to be less physically active; young allergy sufferers are more likely to smoke or drink during adulthood; and allergic diseases often cause inflammation, one of the primary risk factors for developing heart diseases.

"Given how common these allergic diseases are in childhood, it suggests we need to screen these children more aggressively to make sure we are not missing high cholesterol and high blood pressure, " said Jonathan Silverberg, MD, director of Northwestern University's Multidisciplinary Eczema Center, and lead researcher of the study. "There may be an opportunity to modify their lifestyles and turn this risk around."

Allergy rates across the United States are on the rise. Click here to learn more about why there's been an uptick.

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