

Are Kids With Asthma Being Prescribed Unnecessary Antibiotics?

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Using unnecessary antibiotics can be bad for everyone. Now, new findings presented at the European Respiratory Society International Congress 2017 reveal that children with asthma are more likely to be prescribed antibiotics even though they don't require them, reports [ScienceDaily](#).

For the study, researchers assessed 1.5 million children from the United Kingdom, including 150,000 with asthma and 375,000 children from the Netherlands, including 30,000 with the chronic condition. Next, scientists compared antibiotic prescription data for kids with asthma to those without the illness and evaluated the results from both countries. (Both countries follow the same international guidelines on asthma treatment.)

Findings indicated that overall, children with asthma were almost 1.6 times more likely to be given antibiotics compared with those who didn't have the condition. Researchers found that in the Netherlands, doctors wrote 197 prescriptions per 1,000 children with asthma per year versus 126 prescriptions for every 1,000 children without asthma. Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, there were 374 prescriptions written for antibiotics per 1,000 children with asthma compared with 250 prescriptions for every 1,000 children without asthma.

"Antibiotics should only be given when there is clear evidence of a bacterial infection such as for pneumonia," said Esmé Baan, MD, of the Department of Medical Informatics at Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands. "However, we saw that, in children with asthma, most of the antibiotic prescriptions in children were intended for asthma exacerbations or bronchitis, which are often caused by a virus rather than bacteria."

Baan suggested that this might be because general practitioners may find it difficult to differentiate between a deterioration of asthma symptoms and a bacterial respiratory infection. As a precaution, she advised that physicians should be discouraged from prescribing unnecessary antibiotics, as this can give rise to more drug-resistant infections later on.

[Click here](#) to read about the link between asthma and type 1 diabetes.
