

# Household Cleaners May Damage Lungs Like Pack-a-Day Smoking Habit, According to New Study

Scientists at Norway's University of Bergen found that using toxic cleaning products has as much of an impact on health as smoking a pack of cigarettes a day.

The study tracked 6,000 people, with an average age of 34 at the time of enrollment in the study, who used the cleaning products over a period of two decades, according to the research published in the American Thoracic Society's American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine. Lung function declined in women who regularly used cleaning products. They, such as those who worked as cleaners, was equivalent over the period to those with a 20-cigarette daily smoking habit.

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*While the short-term effects of cleaning chemicals on asthma are becoming increasingly well documented, we lack knowledge of the long-term impact. We feared that such chemicals, by steadily causing a little damage to the airways day after day, year after year, might accelerate the rate of lung function decline that occurs with age." – Dr. Cecile Svanes, professor at the University of Bergen in Norway, senior author of the study.*

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The study measured lung function by testing the amount of air the subjects could forcefully breathe out. They examined the results alongside a questionnaire where participants were asked about they use cleaning products. The study found that

women who used the cleaning products regularly have decreased lung capacity and an increased rate of asthma. The products seemed to affect women more than men, though the scientists noted that the number of male participants was limited. The mode of chemical cleaner—be it spray or other liquid—was not statistically relevant, only that a chemical cleaner was used.

*When you think of inhaling small particles from cleaning agents that are meant for cleaning the floor and not your lungs, maybe it is not so surprising after all.” – Øistein Svanes, a doctoral student.*

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