A BREATH OF FRESH AIR WITH THE HYGIENE HYPOTHESIS

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS – With more Americans every year suffering from asthma and allergies, there may finally be an answer to explain the increase.

Recent research uncovered the hygiene hypothesis to help explain recent increases in asthma and allergy cases.

The hygiene hypothesis states that environment today is such a clean environment compared with what it used to be. Dr. Andrea Borchers said “This change is due several factors. The environment has change, smaller family size, and fewer family farms have all led to more cases of allergies and asthma.”

One part of the change is that the environment has fewer pollutants because of cleaner running cars and emission controls that were not in place in the past. Another change is that family size has decreased in the past 30 years causing children to come in contact with fewer infections during early childhood which protect them later in life.

The third change is that there are fewer family farms. While this may not seem relevant, it actually has a large impact on many people. The animals on farms have naturally-occurring bacteria which can help children build their immune systems so that infections like asthma and allergies can be perhaps avoided later in life.

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Understanding the hygiene hypothesis and how it works can help doctors and patients work together to prevent asthma and allergy symptoms. The understanding of what is causing the rapid increase of these diseases can help asthma and allergy sufferers who would just like an answer to the question: Why them?

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