

Early exposure to dogs lowers asthma risk in children

written by Dr. Leo Galland | November 5, 2015

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Is it safe to have dogs around newborn babies?

Research found that a reduced risk for childhood asthma at the age of six was associated with exposure to dogs or farm animals during a child's first year of life.

Childhood asthma is a global health concern. A number of environmental factors have been associated with either increased or decreased risk of asthma.

Tove Fall, Ph.D., of Uppsala University, Sweden, and coauthors looked at the association between animal exposure and asthma in a nationwide study that included all of the more than 1 million children born in Sweden from 2001 through 2010. Registry data was used for information on dog and farm animals, as well as asthma medication and diagnosis.

Dog exposure during the first year of life was associated with a 13 percent decreased risk of asthma in school-age children. Farm animal exposure was associated with a 52 percent reduced risk of asthma in school-aged children and 31 percent reduced risk in preschool-age children respectively, the results indicate.

The authors note their results were independent of parental asthma or whether the child was first-born. Some study limitations were mentioned.

"For what we believe to be the first time in a nationwide setting, we provide evidence of a reduced risk of childhood asthma in 6-year-old children exposed to dogs and farm animals. This information might be helpful in decision making for families and physicians on the appropriateness and timing of early animal exposure," the study concludes.

Reference:

"Early Exposure to Dogs and Farm Animals and the Risk of Childhood Asthma," Tove Fall, Cecilia Lundholm, Anne K Örtqvist, Katja Fall, Fang Fang, Åke Hedhammar, Olle Kämpe, Erik Ingelsson, Catarina Almqvist, *JAMA Pediatr.* 2015;169(11):e153219. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2015.3219.

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<http://pilladvised.com/2015/11/early-exposure-to-dogs-lowers-asthma-risk-in-children/#sthash.JJNfWVEh.dpuf>