

Asthma symptoms kicking up? Check your exposure to air pollution

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People who suffer from asthma may think there's not a lot they can do to control their asthma besides properly taking medications and avoiding allergic triggers.

According to a new article in the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, the scientific publication of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), [asthma sufferers](#) can learn lessons about managing their asthma by examining their lifestyle. The woman described in the *Annals* article improved her asthma once she and her doctor determined her bike route to work was taking her on a more polluted route than necessary. The woman had recently moved from a rural community to a dense urban environment. She enjoyed biking to work, and her new route took her along streets with lots of traffic.

"This experience shows that allergists can integrate their knowledge of the effects of [air pollution](#) into individual patient care, particularly asthma action plans," said pulmonologist Chris Carlsten, MD, MPH, the paper's senior author. "Air pollution is known to be associated with worsening asthma symptoms, but sometimes changing routines with regard to exposure to air pollution can have a positive effect."

After the woman's bike route was analyzed, it was determined that 70 percent of her commute was in close proximity to major roadways. Her doctor recommended an alternate route by which only 15 percent of her time was within 300 meters of high-traffic roads. By following the new route over the next month, her [asthma symptoms](#) improved.

"Allergists are in a position to suggest ways asthma sufferers can reduce their exposure to air pollution," said allergist Michael Foggs, president of ACAAI. "And it's important for people with [asthma](#) to discuss everything with their allergist that might be contributing to their worsening symptoms – whether they think it's a factor or not.

Patients have the best information about themselves."

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

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