

[IMAGE]

## Antibiotics, GI Health and Asthma: Connecting the Dots

By Editorial Staff

Asthma is in the news right now because it is among the health conditions listed as possible risk factors for COVID-19 complications. It makes sense, of course: If the virus gets into the lungs of an asthmatic, who already has problems with breathing due to asthma, it could make things worse – much worse, depending on how powerfully the virus takes hold.

Whether we're in the throes of a COVID-19 crisis or not, there's good news moving forward: Less use of antibiotics may reduce asthma incidence ... and a healthy gut may be the key. In a study published in *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*, researchers evaluated more than 2,500 children to determine their antibiotic use before 1 year of age and whether an association existed with asthma diagnosis at 5 years of age.

Concurrently, researchers assessed how gut microbiota composition related to antibiotic exposure and asthma incidence.

asthma - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Researchers found both a decrease in asthma diagnoses during the 14-year review period and a reduction in antibiotic use: "Asthma incidence in children (aged 1-4 years) showed an absolute decrease of 7.1 new diagnoses per 1,000 children ... (a relative decrease of 26.0%). Reduction in incidence over the study period was associated with decreasing antibiotic use in infancy (age <1 year). ... Asthma incidence increased by 24% with each 10% increase in antibiotic prescribing." Researchers also found "gut microbiota at age 1 year ... to be a significant mediator between outpatient antibiotic exposure in the first year of life and asthma diagnosis at age 5 years."

In other words, less antibiotic use = a healthier gut. A healthier gut = a reduced risk of asthma. Now that's a win-win for your health. Talk to your doctor to learn more about how antibiotics impact gut health and why it's so important to optimize your gut microbiome.

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