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## Cleaning agents linked to asthma

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A health expert has issued a new warning over the link between cleaning sprays and asthma.

Chlorine, bleach, disinfectants and other cleaning agents are fuelling a rise in asthma at home and at work, Jan-Paul Zock said.

He pointed to growing evidence that cleaning products can spark asthma and make existing symptoms worse.

Professional cleaners and health workers who use products in hospitals are particularly vulnerable, he added.

Addressing a European allergy conference in London, Dr Zock said studies had already found higher rates of asthma among caretakers, cleaners, housekeepers and nurses.

Breathing in bleach, ammonia, decalcifiers, acids, solvents and stain removers more than once a week was linked to a 20% rise in asthma or wheezing, Dr Zock said.


People who use cleaning products frequently are most at risk, as are those who use them for long periods. How strong a product is, together with how well a room is ventilated, also affects the risk.

Dr Zock said more studies were needed on people's exposure at home, which can be difficult to track.

However, he said, many people at home could be at risk.

"The number of people at risk is very large," said Dr Zock, from the Centre for Research in Environmental Epidemiology in Barcelona. "Our research shows that cleaning-related asthma is an important public health issue and it is potentially preventable."

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