

HEALTH News & Notes

Will Climate Change Affect Allergic Asthma?

(NAPSA)—As more people accept the reality of global climate change, some are wondering how the changing climate will affect the incidence and severity of asthma.

Recently, a panel of experts discussed this issue in a podcast available at whatsmyige.com. The experts included Gregg Mitman, author of “Breathing Space” and medical historian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; Mike Tringale, director of external affairs at the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA); and Jeffrey Wald, M.D., of Kansas City Allergy & Asthma Associates.

Asthma incidence is on the rise, say these experts, and the numbers could continue to grow. Among the 20 million Americans with asthma, 60 percent have allergic asthma, which can be triggered by allergens such as dust mites, mold, pet dander, pollen and/or cockroaches.

Because this type of asthma can be set off by allergies to environmental triggers, climate change can increase its incidence.

Fortunately, scientists have insights into the allergic response. For example, they know that IgE is a key antibody in that response. According to Mitman’s book, “Breathing Space,” the discovery of this antibody has given allergists “a biochemical measure to identify and more precisely define allergic disease.”

The experts also concluded that people in poorer neighborhoods may have to deal with more than a fair share of environmentally induced health problems.



Effects of climate change may present a new challenge for asthma sufferers.

According to Mike Tringale, much can be done from an advocacy standpoint, such as the implementation of environmental smoking bans, better conditions for people in public housing, and increased funding for research.

On an individual basis, controlling asthma requires the assistance of a specialist. On a community level, it requires advocates working to reduce environmental allergic asthma triggers.

To find out more about the latest insights into the relationship between allergic triggers and asthma, as well as how climate change may affect this relationship, visit AAFA’s allergic asthma awareness program What’s My IgE at www.whatsmyige.com.

What’s My IgE is supported by Genentech, Inc. and Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation.