

# Wheezy? You May Be Allergic to Mold Spores

(The Register's Iowa News Service)  
**IOWA CITY, IA.** — "Parents can get very discouraged about their child's asthma and see only long years of repeated asthma attacks stretching ahead," explained Dr. Jeanne Montgomery Smith, specialist at the University of Iowa Hospital's Allergy Clinic.  
 "They often consider moving to a different region even at great economic loss because of their child's distress."  
**Outgrow Asthma**  
 Hopefully, there is a good chance that the young child will "outgrow" his asthma where he is, particularly if he has not developed an allergy to pollens or molds, according to a recent U of I study directed by Dr. Smith. An estimated 10 per cent of

the population shares similar breathing problems, about half of the distress caused by allergic reactions to ragweed pollen, mold spores or other organic dust.  
 In the study, a group of untreated rural Iowa children suffering from asthma and hay fever was surveyed about the severity, frequency and length of attacks. Five years later, 166 of the children were located and again studied.  
 In all, 29 of the 95 asthmatic sufferers, ranging in age from a few years to 20 years, apparently outgrew their asthmatic condition completely during the five years between surveys.  
 Of the 44 children who had attacks in which they were completely preoccupied with the task of breathing, only

four still suffered this severely five years later.  
 From 26 to 3  
 The number of children who were limited to bed or chair during attacks dropped from 26 to three during the second survey.  
 About 70 per cent of the 95 asthmatic children in the study were either much better or without symptoms when re-surveyed.  
 Many of the youthful hay fever sufferers also improved during the five-year time period. Of 28 children with severe hay fever, but no asthma, 17 had milder symptoms and 11 were the same. Only two of 112 children with only hay fever at the earlier visit had developed asthma.  
 On the darker side, 50 per cent of adult asthma sufferers in the same community

traced the origin of their problem to childhood.  
 Dr. Smith stressed that "any child who has disabling asthma should be seen by a physician and may need to undergo the desensitization process."  
**Substance Injected**  
 This process is one in which small amounts of the offending substance are injected into the patient at intervals to help the body build a tolerance.  
 Another study offers hope for adult asthma and hay fever sufferers who are mobile.  
 "Previously when asthma sufferers asked whether a move to a different part of the country would help, we would tell them, 'No, you're allergy prone and probably will develop a new allergy

wherever you go,'" said Dr. Smith.  
 "However, a study of former patients indicates that if you suffer from a seasonal allergy that is specific to the Midwest, then chances are good that your breathing problems will clear up with a move to the West. And you probably won't develop a new allergy," Dr. Smith said.  
 "If you have an allergy to grass that has a short season here — so short you haven't noticed it — you may have trouble with its longer season in the western states."  
**Sinus Trouble**  
 "And the person who most urgently needs the relief, the person with no allergies but a sinus condition and a year-around breathing problem, probably won't be helped by a move. He'll be taking his

problem with him."  
 In a 15-year follow-up study of U of I students with asthma and hay fever, Dr. Smith learned that 41 out of 88 patients who moved West found that their symptoms were promptly relieved and stayed that way. Another 25 of the 88 patients were "promptly much better."  
 These patients who moved to the eastern United States did slightly better in gradually relieving their symptoms during the 15 years than those who remained in the Midwest, with improvement in 70 per cent of the patients.  
 Happily, most of those "promptly" relieved of symptoms in the new areas did not develop a new allergy, she said. On the other hand, previously unaffected children of the allergic person who mi-

grated to a different part of the nation developed allergies to plants in the new region.  
 "There is absolutely nothing like getting completely away from the thing you're allergic to. But most people don't move just because of their asthma and hay fever. And the people who would be most helped by a move are those in whom the allergy is more a nuisance than life-threatening," Dr. Smith explained.  
**A Refuge**  
 "It's very important, however, that the allergic person have a refuge, whether in California or in an air-conditioned house. At least part of each day during the season should be spent free of the allergen, so that the tissues have a chance to recover and to drain."

If mold spores are the problem — and in the Midwest they often are — allergy sufferers should beware of houses with damp basements, Dr. Smith cautioned. Dehumidifiers may be a good investment for some sufferers, and keeping the house inter- or free of mildew is important.  
 The cool rains of autumn signal the end of suffering for persons allergic to ragweed pollen, but are troublesome for those allergic to mold spores, she said.  
 The rains encourage mold growth under fallen leaves. With the brisk winds of October stirring the leaves and distributing mold spores, many allergic persons agree with Dr. Smith when she says that "Iowa may well be the mold capital of the world."

## CHILDREN IN DISEASE STUDY

By a Staff Writer  
**MUSCATINE, IA.** — About 5,000 Muscatine school children are making a contribution to science by aiding a University of Iowa medical study team.

Last year, 3,700 students in grades three through twelve in the Muscatine schools were tested by medical teams headed by Dr. Ronald M. Lauer, 42, professor of pediatrics at the University of Iowa medical college.

This year the medical team hopes to test an additional 1,500 pupils in the first, second and third grades in the Muscatine schools.

**Main Objective**  
 Said Dr. Lauer: "The main objective of the study is to identify children who might be prone to develop heart attacks, stroke, high blood pressure, obesity or diabetes in adult life."

"We know from studies of adults over long periods that when certain things are present, such as excess fat and cholesterol, these abnormalities tend to be useful predictors of heart attacks and strokes."

"If we find these abnormalities present in childhood, it may prove helpful to begin an educational program as early as possible to prevent later illness."

"It isn't known how frequently these symptoms are present in children."

"If children show high risk factors for these disorders and these symptoms can be identified, treatment can be undertaken in childhood to prevent early onset of the disorders in adult life."

**Started Last Year**  
 The project started last year with \$5,000 in funds from the Iowa Regional Medical program.

This year's study is funded by \$40,000 from the newly-established Specialized Center of Research. The National Heart and Lung Institute selected the University of Iowa to conduct the study.

All pupils in the Muscatine schools were asked last year to get parental approval to be part of the testing program. Seventy per cent received approval and participated in the project.

The same procedure is being followed this year with approval for participation being asked of the parents of 1,500 first, second and third graders. These pupils were "missed" in last year's tests.

Letters with the results of the 1970 tests have been sent to parents of participating children.

Of those students, those whose examinations indicated unusual fat or fat-like substances and unusual cholesterol levels will be examined again periodically.

**Examined Again in 1972**  
 In 1972, all students will again be examined to see if predisposing factors for the disorders might appear at different ages.

A student who had none of the factors in the first test might show signs of them two years later.

"No one knows when these things first show up," Dr. Lauer said. "It will be useful to us to follow the children through the years to see any development of these risk factors."

All examinations are performed at the Muscatine schools. The examinations include measurements of height, weight, blood pressure, skinfold thickness (a measurement of body fat) and a blood sample. The blood samples are analyzed at the University of Iowa for fat and cholesterol.

## Find Trees and Shrubs Muffle Noise Pollution

(The Register's Iowa News Service)  
**AMES, IA.** — Excessive noise is a form of environmental pollution that can be reduced by trees and vegetation.

The din of highway traffic, passenger cars, shopping centers and heavy industrial areas can be substantially reduced when screened through properly located tree and shrub plantings, according to Ed Grafton, extension forester at Iowa State University.

**Sound Levels**  
 Tape-recorded sounds of highway and city traffic have been projected through belts of trees and shrubs, and the resulting sound levels measured at varying distances behind the belts. Sounds were also recorded at locations where conditions were almost identical except for the lack of trees and shrubs.

Comparisons of the sounds, with and without foliage, revealed effectiveness of tree and shrub barriers in reducing sound levels as much as 50 per cent.

Trees and shrubs as a noise-reducing medium are influenced by several factors. Height, width and overall density of the barrier as determined by species, planting patterns, tree spacing in and between the rows and foliage distribution all contribute to reducing noise.

The value of trees as noise screens is affected by proper location. A relatively narrow belt of dense shrubs and moderately tall trees would be adequate for noise screening in urban residential areas but might be ineffective in rural areas with different noise sources.

Placement of tree noise screens between the sound source and the protected area is important. A screened place

close to the noise source is more effective than one placed close to the area to be protected.

**Wide Belts**  
 In general, wide belts of trees are most effective. Species do not appear to differ greatly in their ability to reduce noise levels, provided the deciduous varieties are in full leaf.

Planting distances from 35 to 65 feet from the noise source would probably yield optimum results for tree belts of considerable height and depth in rural areas.

### A Pilot Safety Seminar Here

A pilot educational seminar will be held for Des Moines area pilots at the Iowa Air National Guard headquarters, 4200 S.W. Thirty-fourth St. at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday.

The aviation industry of Des Moines is making a concentrated effort to promote general aviation safety through pilot educational seminars and recurrent training, said Murry Witherby, accident prevention specialist for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Quarterly pilot seminars on new regulations, procedures and technique are planned.

The aviation industry committee includes representatives of Des Moines Flying Service, Iowa Aviation, Elliott Flying Service, Professional Pilot Training, the Ninety-Nines, Iowa Aeronautics Commission, Experimental Aircraft Association, Antique Aircraft Association, National Weather Service, and the FAA.

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