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## **ASTHMA RISK FOR TOO MUCH TV?**

By Glenn King, PhD, R.D., C.N.

Children who watch television for more than two hours a day have twice the risk of developing asthma, says British researchers report this month.

Parents have long known that polluted, pollinated air outdoors can bring on asthma attacks in their children. Now a high increase of asthmatic city kids are also under assault inside their homes. Cigarette smoke, dust mites, mold and cooking smells can actually make them more sick than common exposure to car exhaust or ragweed.

The greatest increase is the connection between television and asthma. This may help us understand more about cause and effect for other disorders as well. Reported asthma affects more than 300 million people globally. Asthma is the most common children's chronic illness. Symptoms include wheezing, shortness of breath, coughing and chest tightness.

The rise in obesity and lack of exercise link to asthma, estimated to account for one in every 250 reported deaths worldwide each year, says a published study in the journal *Thorax*.

"There has been a recent suggestion that breathing patterns associated with sedentary behavior could lead to developmental changes in the lungs and wheezing illnesses in

children," Andrea Sherriff - University of Glasgow.

Sherriff and colleagues studied more than 3,000 children from birth until nearly the age of 12.

The parents were questioned annually on wheezing symptoms of their children and whether a doctor had diagnosed asthma. The researchers also analyzed how much television the children watched.

Amazingly, video games or personal computers were not considered, but they were not as common in the mid 1990s when the children were growing up, researchers added.

The study found that 6 percent of children around age 12 who had no symptoms of the disease growing up had asthma.

But children who watched television for more than two hours daily were twice as likely to have been diagnosed with asthma, as those who watched less TV.

"The findings add to a wealth of evidence linking a lack of exercise and being overweight with an increased risk of asthma," Elaine Vickers of Asthma UK, (not involved in study) said in a statement. "But this study is the first to directly link sed-



entary behavior at a very young age to a higher risk of asthma later in childhood."

According to the World Health Association, some countries have as many as 30 percent of the children develop the inflammatory disease - asthma.

The International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood (ISAAC), also conducted a study involving 155 centers in 56 countries surveying half a million children age 13-14. They were confounded by a 20-60 fold increase in asthma. The higher numbers were industrialized countries.

"This is an additional connection to TV, EMF exposure and sedentary lifestyle.

The statements made are valid and important, but there is an additional missing factor in the cause of asthma as noted in the study as well as many other disorders - which is the increased EMF (ElectroMagnetic Field) exposure or radiation," says Glenn King - commentary on the studies. 📍

# LATEST WARNING HIGHLIGHTS - HEALTH DANGERS OF MICROWAVING

By Glenn King, PhD, R.D., C.N.

Zapping frozen meals in the microwave may be fast and easy, but it also can make you sick. That message sure seems slow to catch on, despite a spate of illnesses last year from improperly microwaved frozen foods.

Last October the government issued a new warning urging consumers to thoroughly cook frozen chicken dinners after 32 people in 12 states became seriously ill with salmonella poisoning.

“Given how people use microwaves, it’s really for reheating, but not so good for cooking,” says Doug Powell, scientific director of the International Food Safety Network - Kansas State University.

The problem is that microwaves heat unevenly, and can leave cold spots in the food that harbor dangerous bacteria, such as E. coli,

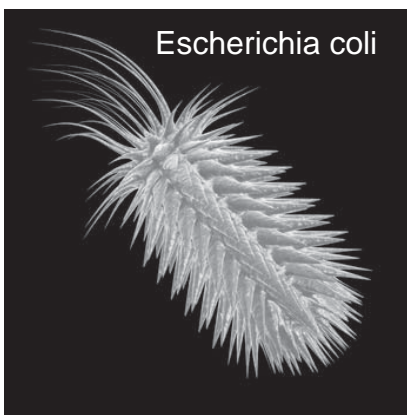
thing that’s from a raw state,” says Michael Davidson - University of Tennessee food microbiologist.

hundreds became ill when Banquet pot pies made by ConAgra Foods were linked to a salmonella outbreak and frozen pizzas made by General Mills were tied to an E. coli outbreak. Both products were recalled.

“Dispite the years of reports and warnings of the dangers of a microwave oven - every new home has one and most people use them. Well, if the previous reports of dangers didn’t work, why should we think this latest warning will change convenience unhealthy habits. My advice for everyone is NOT to use them at all for anything. Before



Many people wrongly assume all frozen meals are precooked and only need to be warmed. It’s a misconception fostered in part by foods prepared to appear cooked, such as chicken that has been breaded or pre-browned.



salmonella or listeria. Microwaving anything that includes raw meat, whether it’s frozen or thawed, can cause problems.

“I think most food-safety experts probably would have said it’s not a good idea to microwave any-

In reality, even some meals designed to be microwaved can be unsafe if they are not heated thoroughly enough, or are cooked using directions meant for a microwave with different voltage.

The government doesn’t track microwave-related food-borne illnesses, but every year more than 325,000 people are hospitalized for food-related illnesses. Last fall,

we had microwaves... it was not a radical idea... it shouldn’t be radical now - just smart and healthy,” says Glenn King. 🗨️

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#### SPEAKERS

Glenn T. King, PhD, RD, CN and James O. Robertson, ND

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