

Protecting children from eye allergies may be as simple as encouraging physical fitness

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Allergies are one of the most common conditions in children, with eye allergies, or allergic conjunctivitis, affecting up to 30 percent of children worldwide. New research from Taiwan suggests that there may be an easy way to bring that number down, encourage physical fitness. Just don't send the kids outside on days when air quality is poor.

The research also showed that children exposed to large amounts of air pollution were at greater risk of allergic conjunctivitis. The researchers hope their study will promote [physical activity](#) in children and inspire policymakers to prioritize environmental protection. The data will be presented at AAO 2022, the 126th annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

"The rising prevalence of allergic diseases, particularly in the pediatric population, is a serious global public health concern," said lead researcher Tsai-Chu Yeh, MD. "Although symptoms in allergic

conjunctivitis are often considered minor, it tends to have a chronic course with multiple recurrent episodes and can negatively affect school performance and quality of life in children."

Allergic conjunctivitis is when an allergen causes inflammation of the conjunctiva, the clear tissue covering the white of the eye. Symptoms include eye redness, itching, and watery eyes.

To conduct the study, the researchers tracked the health data of 1,271,730 children who were examined at age 10. Data were collected from 2010 to 2018. They used Taiwan's nationwide Physical Fitness Test to measure the children's [physical fitness](#), a test that measures muscular endurance, muscular power, cardiorespiratory endurance, and flexibility.

Researchers found that children who were more physically fit were less likely to develop allergic conjunctivitis. Those who were at increased risk tended to be overweight, experienced greater exposure to air pollution, lived in densely populated [urban areas](#), and had a history of asthma and/or [allergic rhinitis](#).

This research supports several previous studies that suggest a relationship between allergic conjunctivitis and air pollution levels.

More information: Conference: aao.apprisor.org/apsHome.cfm

Provided by American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO)

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