

Nurses who breathe in cleaning chemicals are more likely to get asthma

Nurses who are exposed to cleaning products, antiseptics and disinfectants in hospitals are 70 per cent more likely to be diagnosed with asthma, research has found.

By Rebecca Smith, Medical Editor

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Researchers in America found chemicals in wards run by nurses which could irritate the lungs including cleansers and antiseptics used on patients' skin, chemicals used in the sterilisation of equipment and all purpose cleaners such as bleach.

Using powdered latex gloves, before they were phased out, and administering medicines in aerosol form also increased the risk of asthma, the study found.

There are 5.4m people in the UK currently receiving treatment for asthma and cleaning products and irritants in the workplace are known to be one of the causes of the disease.

The findings are based on a sample of 3650 healthcare workers including 941 nurses in Texas, America.

Cleaning instruments was associated with a 67 per cent increased chance of being diagnosed with asthma and nurses who were exposed to general cleaning products were 72 per cent more likely to have asthma.