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Asthma rates in some Cook suburbs worse than city's

'FAR TOO MANY DEATHS' | Research finds Stickney more than double

April 30, 2008 **BY [MONIFA THOMAS](#)** Health
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Research has shown that where you live in Chicago has a big impact on whether your kids develop asthma. Now, a new analysis by the Chicago Reporter suggests this is even more true in suburban Cook County, where asthma hospitalization rates among kids in some suburbs are much higher than in the most affected Chicago neighborhoods.

West suburban Stickney, for example, had the county's highest hospitalization rate -- more than double that of any Chicago ZIP code, the Reporter found.

Other suburbs that topped the list were Calumet Park, Harvey, Barrington, Riverdale and Elgin.

The Reporter analyzed 2004 data from the Chicago and Cook County health departments and compared it to national figures.

One of the key findings was that four Chicago ZIP codes and nearly 30 suburban Cook County municipalities had more than double the national rate of asthma-related hospitalizations per 100,000 youth.

Chicago's death rate from asthma is also twice that of the national average.

Race and income are strong indicators of asthma prevalence, with blacks and Puerto Ricans at highest risk. But poor indoor and outdoor air quality also can trigger it.

Knowing where asthma rates are highest can help health officials pinpoint and possibly improve certain environmental risk factors, said Maureen Damitz, senior director of programs for the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago.

Parents of asthmatic children who are living in the most affected communities also should consider relocating if they can. Or at the very least, being more vigilant on ozone-alert days, experts said.

But the bigger issue for preventing asthma hospitalizations and deaths, Damitz said, is making sure asthma is properly diagnosed and treated.

"We still have far too many deaths from untreated asthma," she said.

[The Friday List: Four Surprising Asthma Statistics](#)

From Asthma Mom

[Asthma Parents, Let's Not Forget Global Warming](#)

From Asthma Mom

The views expressed in these blog posts are those of the author and not of the Chicago

Sun-Times.

catracho wrote:

I live in Stickney and I can't help but to wonder if nearby plants have anything to do with this problem...

4/30/2008 8:30 AM CDT on suntimes.com

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