

**Study: Air Pollution Causes Irregular Menstrual Cycles In Teen Girls**

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**BOSTON —** Air pollution can cause irregular menstrual cycles in teenage girls, a first-of-its-kind study finds.

Researchers from the Boston University School of Medicine looked at health data collected from nearly 35,000 women who participated in the [**Nurses Health Study 2**](https://www.nhs3.org/index.php/our-story/20-nurses-health-study-2) in 1989. The authors looked at the locations of the participants and researched EPA air quality measurements the women were exposed to during their high school years.

A new study finds that a teen girl’s exposure to air pollution can cause an irregular menstrual cycle during high school and into adulthood.

After comparing the measurements to participants who reported having irregular menstrual cycles, the researchers discovered that teen girls exposed to higher levels of air pollution were at a slightly higher risk of having irregular periods. Affected teens also took longer to achieve regular periods in high school and early adulthood.

“While air pollution exposures have been linked to cardiovascular and pulmonary disease, this study suggests there may be other systems, such as the reproductive endocrine system, that are affected as well,” says corresponding author Dr. Shruthi Mahalingaiah, an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology and a physician in obstetrics and gynecology at Boston Medical Center, in a news [**release.**](https://www.bumc.bu.edu/busm/2018/01/25/air-pollution-linked-to-irregular-menstrual-cycles/)

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Prior research has shown that air pollution can have ill effects on hormonal activity. Because periods rely on normal hormonal regulation, the authors sought to see how particulate matter — a combination of liquid droplets and particles like dirt, dust, soot, or smoke that enter the air — could take a toll on the menstrual cycle.

The results were strongest for women who lived in the Northeast or West. Like authors in many other air pollution studies, the researchers say that cleaner air could lead to greater health outcomes in large populations.

“Implications on human disease may come through reducing emissions on a global and individual level,” says Mahalingaiah.

The study’s [**findings**](https://academic.oup.com/humrep/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/humrep/dey005/4824983?redirectedFrom=fulltext) were published yesterday in the journal *Human Reproduction*.

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