



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2010 Volume VI: Evolutionary Medicine

The Human Impact on the Environment and the Effects on Asthma and Allergies

Guide for Curriculum Unit 10.06.03, published September 2010
by Deborah James

The purpose of this curriculum unit is to inform teachers of health and sciences about the increase of students with asthma and allergies over the years, particularly food allergies. May is asthma awareness month; therefore this curriculum unit investigates if humans contribute to this growing problem by looking at what scientists currently theorize are the causes for this increase of allergy and asthma sufferers.

This curriculum unit gives background information on the theories of why more people are developing allergies and asthma. Genes have a lot to do with this, as well as environmental factors — whether it is increased levels of air pollution, or global warming which increases the length of the growing season and pollen in the air. Others theorize that Americans are living in a "super-clean" environment not giving our immune system what it needs to develop the way it has over centuries through evolution.

Sample lessons include teaching students what asthma is and what we can do to decrease the risks of an asthmatic attack. The unit is designed to have students that do not suffer from asthma be more sympathetic to the asthma sufferer and be more aware of what to look for in case there is an emergency. The unit is also intended to help a student who is asthmatic know what to do if an attack occurs. New legislation is being looked into to enable asthmatic students to keep their inhalers with them rather than in the nurse's office.

(Developed for Biology and Human Health, grades 5-8 and 6-targeted; recommended for Biology and Human Health, grades 5-8)

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use