

Air Pollution in Schools

By now it's a known fact that children are more vulnerable towards catching various diseases, mainly because of their developing immune systems. As a parent, you do what you think is best for your child, but often you would not really see what happens to your child's health when he or she is out. In order to give all around protection to your child, you need to make sure that you are considering all aspects of your child's life so that you can keep him or her safe from the plight of air pollution. Indoor air pollution, such as that found in schools, remains a potential health risk and you need to understand it so that it can be controlled effectively.

Air pollution: when a person hears this, the first thing that comes to mind is smoke, carbon monoxide, carbon emissions, and smog. But most people don't know that air pollution indoors is also a major cause of concern and should not be taken lightly. Indoor air pollution includes smoke from cigarettes, faulty air conditioning systems, paint emissions (yes there is such a thing), poor ventilation, and also a damaged fireplace.

While not trying to raise alarms, it's important to understand the risks. There are always steps to be followed so that children stay safe in their school. The school in question needs to be tested thoroughly. Here are some guidelines:

First, an assessment should be completed, which would tell you the exact levels of air pollutants that are present in the school's atmosphere and also what is considered a safe count for those particular pollutants.

Once the level of exposure has been determined, the next step should be to develop a prevention action plan. This will lower and also prevent the exposure levels in the school area. The prevention techniques will depend on what kind of pollutants are present. Some prevention guidelines should include:

- Restricting smoking around the entire school area.
- Inspecting building material for harmful substances if construction is taking place.
- Installing proper and efficient ventilation systems throughout the school so that the air remains pure and clean.

Once most conventional causes of the air pollution are addressed, the lesser-known culprits, such as mold, will remain at large. The reason this goes unnoticed is because this pesky microbe hides in places people generally won't be looking. Yet this also causes breathing problems and is one of the causes of asthma. The molds release mycotoxin which is a toxic air borne substance, and attacks humans by affecting their lungs. Now that it's out of the bag, here are some methods that can be utilized to make the school air clean and get rid of the mold air quality:

- Identify the reason behind mold formation and its contamination. A survey conducted in schools found that fungal spores and bacteria were present in the air. Also, the presence of water damage in the building could cause mold air contamination.

- Once the allergens are known, find out places where mold can grow. Though they are highly resilient, they prefer damp places, mostly, such as bathrooms, the kitchen, and basement area.
- Install exhaust fans namely in bathrooms, basements, etc. so that there is no stagnant air for molds to thrive on. Make sure that school officials thoroughly dry objects that have become wet.