



## Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

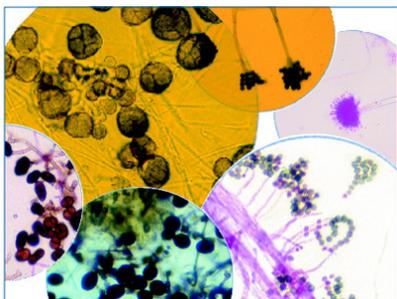
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### NEWS AND EVENTS

- **Help Reduce the Spread of Seasonal Influenza:** For tips and recommendations, read the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) guide "[How to Clean and Disinfect Schools to Help Slow the Spread of Flu.](#)" This resource is also available in [Spanish](#).
- **Secondhand Smoke, a Fatal Threat for Children:** According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in 100 people around the world die from secondhand smoke each year — and nearly two-thirds of the deaths are children. [Read more](#) about secondhand smoke and WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative.
- **Dampness and Mold Assessment Tool:** The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has developed an observational assessment tool for identifying and tracking areas of dampness and mold in buildings. Facilities managers from various school districts are assessing their schools using the tool and will be providing feedback to NIOSH on its effectiveness. If you are interested in piloting this assessment tool in your school district or if you simply want to learn more, contact NIOSH at [moldsheet#1@cdc.gov](mailto:moldsheet#1@cdc.gov).

### MOLD 411: ANSWERS TO COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS



#### 1. How do I know if my school has a mold problem?

The key to detecting mold growth is to [inspect school buildings](#) for existing or potential moisture issues. Visual inspection of all school areas, including classrooms, restrooms and kitchens, is essential — as mold

### PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE

Visit the [IAQ Tools for Schools National Symposium](#) website to view presentations from this year's symposium, which was held Jan. 13-15, 2011.

### SHOULD WE HAVE OUR SCHOOLS TESTED FOR MOLD? CAN AIR FRESHENERS TRIGGER STUDENTS' ASTHMA?

Have these and other questions answered on the Schools IAQ Connector E-mail Discussion Forum. Join today by sending a blank e-mail message to [schools\\_iaq\\_connector-subscribe@lists.epa.gov](mailto:schools_iaq_connector-subscribe@lists.epa.gov). Then check your e-mail inbox for your confirmation and membership details.

### ACCESS PAST E-NEWSLETTERS ONLINE

Can't find a past *IAQ Tools for Schools* Connector e-newsletter in your e-mail inbox? No problem! Wish you could read past editions? You can! Visit the [e-newsletter archive](#) to access printable versions (PDF) of all past editions on the *IAQ Tools for Schools* website.

growth may be caused by water leaks, flooding or high humidity and condensation. Mold may not always be visually noticeable; it can grow under carpeting, inside walls, above ceiling tiles or inside ventilation equipment — wherever there is enough moisture to support growth. Other indicators of mold problems are musty, earthy odors or evidence of moisture problems, such as water stains or high relative humidity measurements. An increase in complaints from building occupants experiencing allergic or asthma symptoms may also lead to mold detection. Adverse reactions to mold are common in individuals with asthma who may be sensitive to this trigger.

## 2. Who can check for a mold problem at my school?

Although you may test for mold, there are no national standards for mold levels, as mold is always present in natural environments. Assessing your school building through visual inspection is the most reliable way to detect mold and moisture issues. Your local or state health department should be able to refer you to local professionals who provide inspection services if necessary. Some health departments may also offer services to come and help assess mold conditions in your school buildings. If large amounts of mold are present or if mold is suspected in a building but no detection has been made, the services of an industrial hygienist may be required. EPA does not certify or license mold inspectors.



## 3. How can I clean up mold, and what kinds of chemicals should I use?

To clean up mold safely and effectively, remove the mold as thoroughly as possible and protect workers and building occupants from exposure during the cleaning process. Cleaning up mold does not require the use of toxic chemicals; many surfaces may be cleaned with a simple detergent and water solution. If moldy materials are damaged or cannot be thoroughly cleaned, they should be removed. Dust generated by mold remediation can be removed by damp wiping smooth surfaces or using vacuums equipped with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters. For information on the methods and precautions to use when cleaning up mold, consult the EPA guide [Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings \(PDF\)](#).

## 4. Why does mold keep coming back after it is cleaned up?

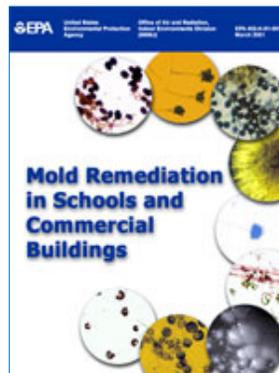
There is always some mold in the air — both indoors and outdoors — that will continue to grow in areas with an abundance of moisture. To prevent mold from returning, the sources of moisture must be identified and fixed. Structural building issues — leaky roofs, cracks in the foundation, deteriorating or faulty windows, or plumbing leaks — should be fixed, as they can lead to repeated moisture problems and trigger mold growth. Weather and climate can also affect mold and moisture, so controlling the relative humidity indoors is very important. In hot, humid climates, moisture from outdoor air, as well as moisture from occupant activities, can condense on cool surfaces such as basement walls, cold water pipes or air conditioning ducts. In cold climates, windows or poorly insulated walls may sweat in the winter months.

## MOLD AND MOISTURE CONTROL CHECKLIST

Take control of mold and moisture issues at your school using the [Framework for Effective School IAQ Management](#) – guidance that provides technical solutions and strategies to prevent common IAQ problems in schools.

- Establish a mold prevention and remediation plan within your greater [IAQ management program](#).
- View the [IAQ Reference Guide on Mold and Moisture](#) in the *IAQ Tools for Schools* Action Kit for tips on identifying and correcting common mold and moisture issues.
- Prevent moisture condensation by increasing surface temperature, installing proper insulation and improving air circulation.
- Eliminate sources of moisture by reducing indoor humidity — maintain indoor humidity levels between 30 and 60 percent.
- [Inspect](#) all school buildings for signs of mold, moisture, leaks or spills.
- Respond promptly when you see signs of moisture and/or mold or when leaks or spills occur. Dry all wet areas within 24 to 48 hours.
- Perform regular [heating, ventilation and air conditioning \(HVAC\)](#) inspections and maintenance as scheduled. Ensure HVAC drip pans are clean and unobstructed and flow properly.

For more information on how to control moisture and mold in the school environment, view and download [Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings \(PDF\)](#). This guide is complete with key steps on investigating, evaluating and remediating moisture and mold problems, helpful tables and photos, and a list of additional resources.



To learn how other schools have overcome IAQ issues, including mold and moisture, read the [Envisioning Excellence: Lessons from Effective School Indoor Air Quality Programs – A Snapshot of Profiles in Excellence](#).

### HAVE YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

Is there a topic you want to see covered in an *IAQ Tools for Schools* Connector e-newsletter? Need more information or have a quick question? Do you have suggestions for a webinar, an e-newsletter feature, or are you simply curious about an IAQ topic and would like more information? If so, send us an e-mail at [IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com](mailto:IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com).

Share YOUR news and events! Send us information to share with the school IAQ community. It could be featured in the next e-newsletter. E-mail your news to [IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com](mailto:IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com).

The *IAQ Tools for Schools* Program is a comprehensive resource to help schools maintain a healthy environment in school buildings by identifying, correcting and preventing IAQ problems. Learn more about the *IAQ Tools for Schools* Program at [www.epa.gov/iaq/schools](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools).