



Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

IN THIS ISSUE:

- ▶ [Controlling Asthma in Schools through Comprehensive Indoor Air Quality \(IAQ\) Management](#)
- ▶ [News and Events](#)
- ▶ [Asthma Resources](#)
- ▶ [Get Answers to Your Questions](#)

CONTROLLING ASTHMA IN SCHOOLS THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE INDOOR AIR QUALITY (IAQ) MANAGEMENT

Asthma has reached epidemic proportions in the United States and the number of people with asthma continues to grow. Over 25 million Americans, including seven million children, have asthma, and it is a leading cause of absenteeism in schools.

Schools that have a [comprehensive IAQ management program](#) that includes a robust asthma management component are better equipped to create healthy learning environments for all students and staff. Effective IAQ management in schools helps improve the school environment, protect children's health and reduce exposure to environmental [asthma triggers](#) like mold and secondhand smoke.

Include Asthma Strategies in Your School's IAQ Management Program

To address environmental health risks comprehensively, an IAQ management program must address asthma, as IAQ and asthma are inextricably linked. EPA's [Framework for Effective IAQ Management](#) contains programmatic strategies and technical solutions to help school leaders develop an IAQ management program and address common IAQ concerns. It can also help school leaders develop a sustainable asthma management plan that addresses asthma in a measurable and intentional way.

Test Your IAQ Management Knowledge...

1. What actions can health care professionals take to address indoor air quality (IAQ) and asthma in schools?

- A.** Communicate with facilities staff, school officials, administrators, parents and students about school policies on environmental health issues.
- B.** Adopt school policies that require every student with asthma to have an asthma action plan.
- C.** Encourage parents to make school personnel aware of their child's asthma or allergy condition.
- D.** Provide trainings and educational information to school staff, teachers and students on the importance of addressing environmental health issues.
- E.** All of the above.

Find answers to these and other questions on the Schools IAQ Connector Email Discussion List!

The Components of an Asthma Management Plan

Schools with strong asthma management plans help create safe and supportive learning environments for students with asthma. An asthma management plan should include policies and procedures that allow students to successfully manage their asthma at school, including policies on the use of inhalers and other medication, as well as emergency procedures for asthma attacks. As part of the plan, each student with asthma should have an [asthma action plan](#) from their parents or doctor that outlines the student's triggers, medications and emergency contact information. Effective asthma management programs also have a strong evaluation component to help schools evaluate their successes and identify ways to improve, and involve the entire school community, including administrators, teachers, facilities staff and other school leaders.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified six strategies for schools and districts to consider when addressing asthma. The components of "CDC's [Strategies for Addressing Asthma within a Coordinated School Health Program](#)," described below, form the foundation for an effective [asthma management plan](#).

1. Establish management and support systems for [asthma-friendly schools](#).
2. Provide appropriate school health and mental health services for students with asthma.
3. Provide asthma education and awareness programs for students and school staff.
4. Provide a safe and [healthy school environment](#) to reduce asthma triggers.
5. Provide safe, enjoyable physical education and activity opportunities for students with asthma.
6. Coordinate school, family and community efforts to better manage asthma symptoms and reduce school absences among students with asthma.

For both IAQ and asthma management programs, [strong evaluation data](#) are critical to measure program success. Measuring key student health indicators, such as the number of incidents of asthma attacks, headaches, coughs, fevers and itchy eyes, can help identify areas within the school building that may contain IAQ issues or asthma triggers. Gathering these data over time can help improve school attendance rates and [academic success](#) and make it easier to demonstrate the benefits of IAQ and asthma management to school administrators and the community.

"The Louisiana Recovery School District (RSD) takes a proactive approach to managing asthma by working closely with school nurses, parents, healthcare providers and other school leaders to identify students with asthma and effectively track their symptoms and asthma incidence rates. By having an IAQ management program with a strong asthma management component, RSD has been able to address environmental triggers and improve the quality of life of students with asthma."

- Marilyn Hammett, MSN, RN, Coordinator of Health Services, Louisiana Recovery School District, New Orleans, Louisiana

Join today by sending a blank email message to schools_iaq_connector_subscribe@lists.epa.gov. Then check your email inbox for confirmation and membership details.

Access Previous Connector E-Newsletters Online

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



“A school’s IAQ does impact the health of students and staff. Poor IAQ can lead to increased allergy symptoms, asthma attacks, headaches and overall discomfort, which can impact student learning and academic achievement. To create a green and healthy learning environment, IAQ must be addressed and effectively managed. Take action to ensure your school has effective strategies in place to properly manage asthma and IAQ. Get started with EPA’s [Framework for Effective IAQ Management and Action Kit](#).”

- Dr. Larry K. Lowry, Director of Southwest Center for Pediatric Environmental Health & Director of Graduate Programs in Environmental Health, University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler, Texas

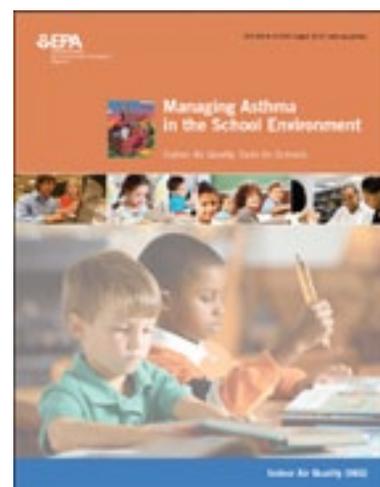
NEWS AND EVENTS

- **National Association of Schools Nurses (NASN) Annual Conference** will take place June 27 - 30, 2013, in Orlando, Florida. [Get more information on this event!](#) Already attending? Check out [EPA’s session](#): Unleash your Superpower: Creating Healthy School Indoor Environments — Call to Action for School Nurses on Friday, June 28, 2013, from 1 – 2 p.m. ET. This session will highlight strategies and resources that school nurses can use to implement a successful environmental health management program in their school. Also during this conference, school nurses participating in the Managing Asthma Triggers (MAT) training will receive comprehensive course notes, asthma-related resources and information about how to become an indoor school environment champion.
- **Sensible Steps to Healthier School Environments Webinar Series.** EPA’s Office of Children’s Health webinar series will outline sensible, low- or no-cost steps that school communities can take to create healthier environments in their buildings. Check out the [webinar schedule](#) to learn more. [Register today](#) for the June 18, 2013, webinar: “The Role of Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) in Creating Healthy Learning Environments.”

ASTHMA RESOURCES

Access the following resources to help you incorporate asthma management efforts into your overall IAQ management program:

- EPA’s [Managing Asthma in Schools](#). This guide offers valuable information for all school employees, especially school nurses, teachers and maintenance staff, on how to identify and control environmental triggers commonly found in schools.
- EPA’s [Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma](#). This brochure, available in both English and Spanish, offers tips on how to manage asthma and simple steps to minimize exposure to asthma triggers found indoors and outside.
- View EPA’s [Air Quality Index](#) and download the free mobile application to determine how clean or polluted the outdoor air is in your area, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you, including asthma.
- National Association of School Nurses (NASN)’s [Asthma Online Tool Kit](#) offers resources and information about asthma, including basic information about the disease and resources for families, children and schools.



- American Lung Association's Resources for Asthma in Schools:
 - [Open Airways For Schools](#).
 - [Lungtropolis™: Where Kids with Asthma Learn to Play](#).
 - [Asthma-Friendly Schools Initiative](#).
 - [Guide to Asthma Policy for Housing & Schools](#).
 - [Asthma Educator Institute](#).
 - [Asthma Basics](#).

GET ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

Is there a topic you want to see covered in an *IAQ Tools for Schools* Connector e-newsletter? Do you have suggestions for a webinar or e-newsletter feature, or do you have questions about a specific IAQ topic? If so, send us an email at 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 Connector e-newsletter. Email your news and events to IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com.

The *IAQ Tools for Schools* guidance is a comprehensive resource designed 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* guidance at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools>.