

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH BRANCH

Occupational Health Watch: May 2017

Disinfectants Can Cause Asthma

Disinfectants are readily available and frequently used in many work settings, including schools, offices, health care, and manufacturing. However, disinfectants are pesticides, and many contain ingredients that can cause or trigger work-related asthma. People may not realize that products they commonly use, such as disposable wipes and common cleaners, often contain disinfectant ingredients. Disinfecting is often unnecessary, for example, for cleaning up a drink spill, a dusty workstation, or a muddy floor. Usually, cleaning with asthma-safer cleaners and microfiber is enough to keep a workplace clean and healthy.



May is Asthma Awareness Month, and employers and workers can read about how to prevent work-related asthma caused by disinfectants in new fact sheets published by the Work-Related Asthma Prevention Program (WRAPP) of the California Department of Public Health. WRAPP has found over 275 people in a variety of work settings who, when interviewed, linked their work-related asthma to disinfectants. One fact sheet was created for employers, and a second fact sheet for workers is available in English, Spanish, and Chinese. They explain work-related asthma, how to prevent asthma from disinfectants, what to do if a worker experiences symptoms, and new requirements for disinfectant use in California schools and childcare.

Resources

Employer fact sheet

Worker fact sheet-English

Worker fact sheet-Spanish

Worker fact sheet-Chinese

WRAPP Website

Email Occupational Health Watch (OHW@cdph.ca.gov) with feedback or change of address.

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