

**Focus on...**

Cleaning with Microfiber: Avoiding Disinfectant Overuse in Schools

When Nancy cleaned the desks in her classroom, she was surprised that the teaching aide, Carmen, suddenly needed her inhaler. What caused Carmen's asthma to flare up? It was the disinfectant wipe that Nancy used.

Disinfectants are pesticides. Under the updated California Healthy Schools Act, any school staff member who uses disinfectants will be required to take a [Department of Pesticide Regulation-approved Training](#), beginning July 2016. This includes teachers who use any type of disinfectant, including disinfecting wipes.

Unfortunately, the scenario involving Carmen and Nancy is all too common. The California Department of Public Health's [Work-Related Asthma Prevention Program \(WRAPP\)](#) has identified over 250 cases of work-related asthma due to disinfectant use. Disinfectants can contain harmful chemicals that can cause or trigger asthma.

WRAPP is providing an alternative for school districts that want to safely clean surfaces and remove germs. WRAPP is seeking school district partners to participate in its [Cleaning for Asthma Safe Schools Microfiber Pilot Project](#) in spring and fall 2016.

Participating districts will receive microfiber cloths, relevant resources, and technical assistance. Teachers and staff can clean with microfiber to maintain healthier classrooms and remove germs without exposing themselves, co-workers, and children to the chemicals in disinfectants. And if they're not using disinfectants or other pesticides, the Healthy Schools Act training is not required. For more information, please send an email to workrelatedasthma@cdph.ca.gov

Resources

[Cleaning for Asthma Safe Schools Microfiber Project](#)
[Department of Pesticide Regulation-approved Training](#)
[Work-Related Asthma Prevention Program \(WRAPP\)](#)

Read about WRAPP's work with schools and cleaning: [Asthma-Safer Schools Cleaning Guide and Video](#)

[OHB](#) improves California worker health and safety through prevention activities. We gather information on job hazards, test new approaches to prevent worker injury and illness, and help make changes at the workplace.

