



# School Pesticide Monitor

A Bi-Monthly Bulletin on Pesticides and Alternatives  
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## Beyond Pesticides' Back-to-School Checklist

It's back-to-school time again! Whether you're a teacher or parent, this is an exciting and busy time of the year as you prepare your child or student for that first day back. Everything from choosing the right notebook and pencils to pulling together a lesson plan is a daunting task.

During this hectic time, however, it's important to remember that children may face unexpected dangers from antibacterial chemicals and other pesticides used in and around schools. The body of evidence in scientific literature shows that pesticide exposure can adversely affect a child's neurological, respiratory, immune, and endocrine systems, even at low levels.

In preparation for the new school year, Beyond Pesticides has put together this easy back-to-school checklist to help safeguard your kids from the dangers that may be lurking at school. Check off the items on this list to start the new school year right and ensure that you are sending your kids back to a healthier and safer environment.

### 1. Get Triclosan Out of Schools and Supplies.

The antibacterial chemical triclo-

san is linked to a range of adverse health and environmental effects, from skin irritation, to hormone disruption, antibiotic resistance, and more.

Avoid products labeled Microban or "with antibacterial protection" as they may contain triclosan, nanoparticles or other dangerous antibacterial agents.

Some brands to look out for include: Avery (binders, paper), C-Line (sheet protectors, project folders), Sharp (calculators), Ticonderoga (pencils, permanent markers, highlighters).

Other school items that may contain antibacterial agents include soaps, lunch kits, backpacks, erasers, socks, clothing, and plastic containers. Read the label to avoid these products.

Ask your school to order regular

soap from its usual janitorial product supplier and that all cleansers and sanitizers used by the school be triclosan-free. Remember to sanitize hands and school items, simple soap and water work best!

*Take Action: Bath & Body Works has marketed an entire line of triclosan-containing body care products to teenagers. Tell Bath & Body Works' CEO: "Stop using toxic triclosan in your products."*

<http://bit.ly/bbwnotoxics>

### 2. Improve Your School's IPM Program.

Children face unique hazards from pesticide exposure because of their small size and developing organ systems. A strong integrated pest management (IPM) program is one of the best ways to minimize or eliminate children's exposure to pesticides while at school.

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#### Integrated Pest Management Defined

IPM is a managed pest management system that: (a) eliminates or mitigates economic and health damage caused by pests; (b) minimizes the use of pesticides and the risk to human health and the environment associated with pesticide applications; and, (c) uses integrated methods, site or pest inspections, pest population monitoring, an evaluation of the need for pest control, and one or more pest control methods, including sanitation, structural repairs, mechanical and living biological controls, other non-chemical methods, and, if nontoxic options are unreasonable and have been exhausted, least toxic pesticides.

## **Back-to-School**

*...continued from front.*

IPM is a program of prevention, monitoring, and control which offers the opportunity to eliminate or drastically reduce pesticides in schools, and to minimize the toxicity of and exposure to any products which are used. Education, in the form of workshops, training sessions and written materials, is an essential component of an IPM program - for everyone from administrators, maintenance personnel, cafeteria staff and nurses to parents and students.

Improving a school's pest management program requires perseverance. Since pest control is not often a large part of the school's budget, many administrators do not consider it a focus and are likely to be uninformed about their school's policy and any available alternatives.

However, along with reducing the use of toxic pesticides on school grounds and playing fields, school districts can also save money in the long run!

See how your state's IPM rates: <http://bit.ly/schoollaws>

*Take Action: Improve your local school's pest management policy, both indoors and on school grounds and playing fields. For details, see our School Organizing guide: <http://bit.ly/pUaEcr>*

### **3. Be Wary of Bed Bugs.**

Whether through the six o'clock news or the aisles of your local home store, you've probably heard about bed bugs by now. Unfortunately, the overuse of pesticides

along with an increase in international travel has contributed to a resurgence of bed bugs.

Pesticides used for bed bugs are linked to cancer, hormone disruption, asthma, neurotoxicity, and more. Plus, they are generally ineffective due to resistance. Fortunately, bed bugs do not transmit disease and can be controlled without toxic pesticides.

Bed bug infestation is not limited to bedrooms and hotels. A child, teacher or staff member with a bed bug infestation at home may carry these pests in their clothing or bag which may then be transported into the school.

Spotting a lone bed bug on the school grounds does not mean that you should reach for the spray. However, you should proceed with caution. Be sure to vigilantly check backpacks, clothing and school supplies (like binders, books) for bed bugs regularly.

*Take Action: Arm yourself and school administrators with the important knowledge of using IPM to prevent and control these pests. Download our Bed Bug factsheet: <http://bit.ly/beyondbedbugs>*

### **4. Look Out for Lice.**

Back-to-school season often also coincides with lice outbreaks. Anyone can get head lice, no matter how often you wash or comb your hair. Lice are a common concern for elementary school-aged children, but don't go reaching for toxic lice shampoos!

Products containing lindane and

permethrin have been linked to cancer, neurological damage and more.

Fortunately, non-chemical treatments such as utilizing directed hot air, can be far more effective at controlling this problem, according to researchers.

*Take Action: Successful treatment relies on an integrated approach that includes monitoring, prevention, physical removal and heat. Learn more in our factsheet, "Getting Nit Picky About Head Lice": <http://bit.ly/nitpicky>*

### **5. Eat (and Grow) Organic Food.**

Organic food is healthier for kids because it reduces their dietary intake of toxic pesticide residues. It is also better for farmworkers and the environment. If you are unable to eat all organic, purchase organic varieties of the foods you and your kids eat the most of, such as milk, juice or eggs.

It's easiest to go organic when you grow organic! School gardens and other farm-to-table programs teach children where food comes from and establishes healthy relationships with food and the natural world.

*Take Action: Ask your school to adopt an organic lunch program, starting with organic produce, milk or juice. Try growing food in an organic school garden.*

*For more information, see, "School Lunches Go Organic" <http://bit.ly/organiclunches> and "The Organic School Garden." <http://bit.ly/schoolgardenorganic>*