



Clark Seif Clark Environmental Newsletter

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Clark Seif Clark is pleased to bring environmental, health & safety and information about building sciences to thousands of professionals each month. We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Asthma and the Link to Exposure to Mold and Bacteria

A new study by European scientists has found that children who grow up on a farm appear to be less likely to develop asthma. In February of this year it was reported in *HealthDay News* that, "The risk of asthma was reduced by as much as 51 percent for children living on farms, and researchers suspect that it's the diversity of exposure to different microbes that may offer protection against the airway disease."



Microbial Growth

Asthma attacks create an inflammation of the lungs and airways leading to difficulty in breathing, shortness of breath and even death. Asthma in children has been reported to be on the rise in many industrialized countries. The article goes on to state that, "Numerous studies have also found that exposure to a variety of microbes in the environment, such as bacteria or fungi, appear to provide protection against asthma, perhaps by helping the body create a tolerance for allergens."

In December, an article posted by *Time* reported that 4.9 million people in California alone suffer from asthma. Research from the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research state that the condition disproportionately affects low income residents. The article also states that between 2001 and 2007 there was a 13%

In This Issue

[Asthma and the Link to Exposure to Mold and Bacteria](#)

[Crystalline Silica Exposure can be Deadly](#)



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overall increase in the asthma rate.

"The reports seem to indicate that as our society becomes more urbanized, we may be creating environments conducive to increased rates of asthma," reported Derrick A. Denis, V.P. of Indoor Environmental Quality at Clark Seif Clark (CSC), a leading provider of indoor air quality investigations. "Exposure to mold, dust mites or other microbial contaminants in indoor environments can trigger asthma attacks in susceptible populations. There are available testing solutions to help measure concentrations of airborne and accumulated microbial elements in homes, schools and offices," he continued.

To help raise awareness of how indoor air quality (IAQ) in the home impacts asthma and allergies, CSC has helped co-sponsor a public outreach video on the topic below.



Biological Contaminants in the Home

To learn more about how CSC can help with IAQ, mold and other environmental issues please visit www.csceng.com, email csc@csceng.com or call (800) 807-1118.

Crystalline Silica Exposure can be Deadly

Last month it was reported at *ClaimsJournal.com* that the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has fined a marble and granite company over \$40,000 for health and safety violations that included workers being exposed to unsafe levels of crystalline silica particles.



Dust Particles

According to an OSHA Fact Sheet on

crystalline silica, "Silica exposure remains a serious threat to nearly 2 million U.S. workers, including more than 100,000 workers in high risk jobs such as abrasive blasting, foundry work, stone cutting, rock drilling, quarry work and tunneling. The seriousness of the health hazards associated with silica exposure is demonstrated by the fatalities and disabling illnesses that continue to occur in sandblasters and rock drillers. Breathing crystalline silica dust can cause silicosis, which in severe cases can be disabling, or even fatal. The respirable silica dust enters the lungs and causes the formation of scar tissue, thus reducing the lungs' ability to take in oxygen. There is no cure for silicosis. Since silicosis affects lung function, it makes one more susceptible to lung infections like tuberculosis. In addition, smoking causes lung damage and adds to the damage caused by breathing silica dust."

In April, OSHA is scheduled to review a proposed rule to lower the Permissible Exposure Limit, or PEL, for crystalline silica.

There are a variety of strategies to reduce worker and bystander exposure to silica dust. A few examples include providing: administrative controls (i.e. training), engineering controls (i.e. wet-cutting), and personal protective equipment, or PPE, (i.e. respirators). However, the only way to determine if controls or PPE are effective in reducing exposure to silica is to conduct a personal exposure assessment and area monitoring. CSC is experienced in monitoring silica dust and other airborne workplace hazards.

To learn more about how CSC can help with industrial hygiene, environmental, IAQ, mold and other environmental issues please visit www.csceng.com, email csc@csceng.com or call (800) 807-1118.

About Clark Seif Clark: CSC was established in 1989 to help clients in both the public and private sectors address environmental issues. CSC is a leading provider of these services with multiple offices along the western seaboard and southwest. The company believes in science-based protocols and has a strong background in engineering making them the preferred environmental consultants to healthcare facilities, architects, schools, builders, contractors, developers and real estate professionals.