



## Are All Playgrounds Safe?

- Some schools still have playground equipment made of wood. Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA) is used to preserve and treat wood. Chromium binds the wood, copper is used as a fungicide, and arsenic (a known carcinogen) acts as an insecticide.
- Exposure to CCA can occur through skin contact and chemicals can seep from the wood and stick to children's clothing and hands.
- CCA-treated wood began being phased out of production in 2003.
- Lead paint is still allowed to be used on playgrounds and can negatively affect health, as well as contaminate the soil surrounding the structure.
- Lead poisoning can lead to behavioral problems, hearing problems, learning disabilities, and growth retardation.
- The sand used in sand boxes may contain crystalline silica, a known carcinogen made from quartz stone.
- Tremolite is a form of asbestos (another recognized carcinogen) and can also be found in some sands.
- Inhalation of these chemicals can also cause respiratory issues.

### Making a Safer Playground

*Learn more about how to choose safe playground equipment and what to avoid at the Healthy Schools Network:*

<http://www.healthyschools.org/HSNP/laygrdGuide.pdf>

*You can learn to make safer choices such as:*

- *Avoid wood playgrounds displaying a greenish tint, often a sign it has been treated with CCA.*
- *When shopping for play sand, look for river or beach sand. Avoid very fine sand which can be inhaled easily. Replace sand every 1-2 years.*

## What You Can Do:

- Communicate with your Parent Teacher Association and school administration office about the dangers of unsafe play equipment. Request that playground equipment be tested for harmful chemicals.
- Have your child's lead levels screened if they have been regularly exposed to unsafe equipment.
- Approach your school administration about updating unsafe playground equipment.
- Make sure to wash children's hands and clothes after they have been playing on playgrounds.
- If it's time for your school to purchase new playground equipment, refer to this factsheet and seek safer alternatives.



**For more information please contact:**

info@HealthySchoolsPA.org • 412.404.2872

5877 Commerce St • Pittsburgh, PA 15206

[www.HealthySchoolsPA.org](http://www.HealthySchoolsPA.org)