

NURSING BACK TO HEALTH

HOSPITAL NURSES HOLDING THEIR BREATH

It has long been thought that health hazards to nurses within hospitals lay primarily with exposure to hazard and disease brought in by clients. Recently, a completed study of the negative impact of indoor air quality in hospitals found additional hazards which they had previously been unaware. A majority of the registered nurses found a sustained compromise in their health status, 10 years after toxic exposures were identified in their work environment. This demonstrates a serious long term occupational hazard with which nurses have to face. Original symptoms and illnesses were reported over an 11-month period between 1993-94. In 2003, 10 years after these exposures were reported, the nurses with the most serious health effects

were surveyed to assess the current conditions of their health. This survey showed that 10 years after the exposure to poor indoor air quality, many of the nurses continue to experience symptoms. Although the rate of symptoms has declined, it has not dropped to pre-exposure levels. Also, certain symptoms continue to be present at high levels at the time they were surveyed. The most frequently reported symptoms included, headache, memory loss, mental cloudiness, dizziness, and paresthesia. Possibly more disturbing than the health effects, many of these nurses have had to leave the nursing field. Also, those nurses surveyed report tremendous difficulty in maintaining employment due to their health conditions and difficulty finding work where

their employers are willing to accommodate their disabilities. Because of these issues nurse activists have spoken out, resulting in one of the country's most progressive programs to advocate for health and safety issues of importance to nurses. Eventually, the hospital involved began to make changes and improve the work environment for nurses as well as the other hospital employees. With this issue in mind, how safe is the environment in our own local hospitals? Have government and regulatory officials taken the appropriate steps to provide a safe environment for our hospital workers here in your town?



Hospital Health Stats:

- Acute Respiratory infections killed 3.5 million people worldwide in 1998 (WHO 1999); Approx. 1/2 pop. PHX, AZ and on the rise.
- 37 million people suffer sinus infections each year in the United States
- The EPA estimates that nearly 30% of our nation's buildings suffer from unhealthy indoor air, Sick Building Syndrome (SBS)
- Pneumonia strikes approximately 4 million people (U.S.) per year, resulting in 600,000 hospitalizations.
- U.S. health care costs attributable to asthma total approximately \$7.5 billion annually.



PAINT, CARCINOGENS AND YOUR HEALTH

The next time you are in your home, look around. You are surrounded by cancer and respiratory problem proponents. The very paint on the walls of your home may be slowly killing you. The largest surface area of any home, the interior walls, are constantly

“off-gassing”, (a process of evaporation). The majority of indoor painting materials contain hazardous and toxic chemicals. This “off-gassing” releases these chemicals into your indoor environment. The harmful short-term effects of this action are often only noticed

by highly allergic and chemically sensitive individuals. However, recent studies have shown that exposure to poor indoor air quality is leading to higher rates of lung cancer, respiratory illness, and other serious health effects in the greater population. What is

the solution? Educate yourself! Before purchasing a product, ask for a MSDS report. This required document lists any hazardous materials contained within a product. You can demand this at any time, it's the law! Then choose the alternative. Why buy toxic?

Innovative Formulations Company

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