

# QUATS IN PUBLIC SPACES

## ARE YOU BEING EXPOSED?

We generally have control over the cleaning products we use in our own homes, but what about the products that are used in the public spaces we visit? Are you being exposed to **quats** in public spaces?

Unfortunately, the answer is probably **YES**.



## WHAT ARE QUATS?

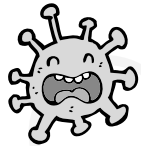
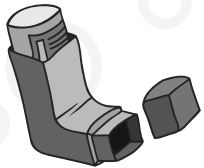
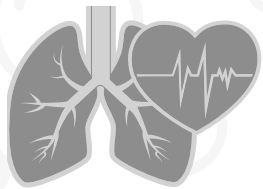
Ammonium quaternary compounds ("**quats**") are potent disinfectant chemicals commonly found in antibacterial cleaning products. **Quats are registered as pesticides with the EPA**, so you should find them listed as "active ingredients" on the front label of disinfectant products.



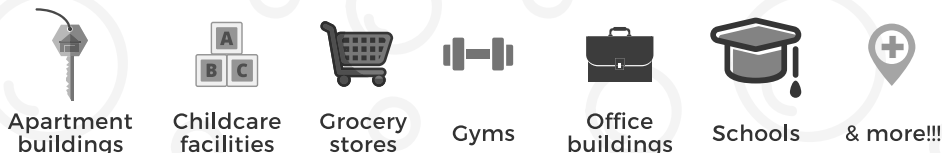
## THE PROBLEM....

**Quats** are strong enough to cause adverse health effects in people who are exposed to them.

- **SKIN IRRITANTS**
- **CAN IRRITATE YOUR LUNGS**
- **HAVE BEEN LINKED TO ASTHMA**
- **LINKED TO FERTILITY ISSUES**
- **REPRODUCTIVE HARM**
- **OVERUSE PROMOTE "SUPERBUGS"** (anti-bacterial resistant bacteria)



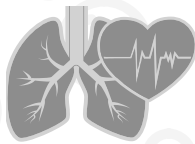
## WHERE QUATS CAN BE FOUND:



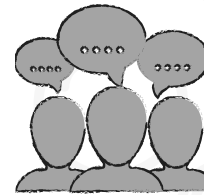
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## WHY QUATS ARE USED

- Cleaning products that have quats are sold at janitorial supply stores.
- These products are marketed as "industrial-strength" cleaners with the extra "advantage" of being potent germ killers.
- Marketing tactics promote the belief that using these products is better and healthier than if we simply cleaned off dust and dirt.
- Outside of hospital operating rooms, where disinfection is necessary, this **germ-free theory** has never been shown to make our spaces any healthier or cleaner.
- Many studies actually show that the health of cleaning workers that use these products have been harmed through exposure.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?



Raise awareness about the potential harms (and unnecessary use) of quats

- Talk to those who make decisions about the cleaning products used in the public spaces you visit, live, work & learn in!
- Talk with other people in your community and ask them to talk with the decision makers too!

Rethink use of disinfectants or antibacterial cleaners (use less)

- For most cleaning jobs, you need a basic cleaner to get rid of dirt, without the overkill of harsh chemicals that kill bacteria.
- Look for safer cleaners like those with active ingredients like hydrogen peroxide & lactic acid.



Wash your hands with soap & water as often as you can



- If you are ever concerned about the spread of infectious disease from a public space – take matters into your own hands – literally!
- While surface disinfecting practices have never been proven to keep people healthy, there is overwhelming evidence of the usefulness of frequent hand-washing to protect your health and prevent the spread of disease.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP IN SHARING THIS INFORMATION! TOGETHER WE CAN KEEP OUR PUBLIC SPACES SAFER, HEALTHIER (AND CLEANER!) FOR ALL WHO ENTER THEM.



WOMEN'S VOICES  
FOR THE EARTH  
OUR HEALTH. OUR FUTURE. TOXIC FREE.

For more info visit: [womensvoices.org/quitquats](http://womensvoices.org/quitquats)

[womensvoices@womensvoices.org](mailto:womensvoices@womensvoices.org) | (406) 543.3747