Did you know that both pesticides and pest infestations can harm your health, and that misused pesticides can make a pest problem worse?

- Children react more strongly than adults to mold, insect stings, and pesticides.
- Pesticides are even more harmful to children than to adults.
- Cockroaches and indoor mold can cause asthma.
- Insect stings send tens of thousands of people to the emergency room each year.
- Rodents and termites cost school taxpayers millions of dollars each year.

What’s the solution?

Integrated pest management, or IPM, is a strategy that controls pests with the least cost and the least toxic chemicals.

IPM focuses on preventing pest problems rather than routinely applying long-lasting pesticides to hallways, kitchens, bathrooms and classrooms. For example, pest proofing and cleanliness can make a school, apartment complex, or home less attractive to pests.

IPM is based on a deep knowledge of pests and of pest control. Anyone with proper training can use IPM. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is the only state agency that conducts IPM training.

IPM protects children’s health.

Children deserve a safe place to learn and grow. Safe and effective pest control is especially important in places where children spend time, including schools, daycare centers, and homes.

Because kids often play on the floor and may put their hands in their mouth, they are more likely than adults to come into contact with pesticides. These chemicals can disrupt the growth of children’s organs and systems, and can remain in children’s bodies longer than in those of adults. IPM protects children from pesticides while controlling pests.

The Texas Legislature passed a law in the early 1990’s requiring that IPM practices be used to manage pests in and around schools. Each Texas school district has an IPM Coordinator who educates school staff, answers parents’ questions about pest management at their child’s school, and ensures that the district follows its IPM policy.
Benefits of IPM schools:
- Better pest control for schools, daycare centers, and apartment complexes
- Better indoor air quality
- Better water quality
- Better health and quality of life for children and adults
- Lower pest control costs
- Higher attendance rates in schools
- Better morale for school staff members
- Prolonged life of buildings

Two state programs help urban dwellers safely control pests.
For more than a decade, two state programs have helped Texans deal with urban pests. The programs are Community IPM and School IPM, both offered by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The programs have experts and resources to help Texans manage pests such as fire ants, bed bugs, wasps, mice, cockroaches, spiders, and bats. The programs offer workshops, newsletters, blog posts, manuals, and DVDs. They teach practices that can improve quality of life and reduce pesticide use.

The programs work with individuals:
- parents
- homeowners
- teachers and school staff members
- sanitarians
- building maintenance workers
- turf and grounds professionals
- pest management professionals

They also work with organizations:
- apartment complexes
- childcare facilities
- emergency and homeless shelters
- health departments
- housing authorities
- school districts
- colleges and universities
- zoos and parks

Along with providing training in IPM, the programs:
- assist with bed bugs
- assist with pest management bids
- provide National Healthy Homes Network training
- provide ISEC (Identify, Sanitize, Exclude, Control) Home Pest Management training
- develop pest management plans for cities, institutions, and others
- help schools follow pest management regulations
- assist with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) pest management

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Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.