

What data/studies are you relying on that synthetic turf fields are safe?

Posed to RSD; remains unanswered.

Yes, they did provide studies, but all were either limited, outdated or taken out of context.

When your foundation is faulty, how can you stand? How can you knowingly put children at risk?

We do know enough about synthetic turf to know it isn't safe.

Precautionary Principle says the proponent of an activity has the burden of proof of safety. Not the public.

Explore the truth in this paper.



BACKGROUND

As a resident of Rockwood School District (RSD), in the St. Louis area, I represent a group of concerned parents/citizens. I care about the safety of our children and wish to share the following information with you concerning the risks associated with synthetic turf fields. Although RSD has recently chosen an “organic” infill, there are still many known dangers and risks associated with the fields themselves. The chosen infill, corkonut, also comes with its own risks.

Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) District Finance Committee – “The goal of this committee is to ensure efficient operations and accountability for fiscally responsible use of district resources.” <http://www.rockwood.k12.mo.us/committees/CSIP/Pages/default.aspx>

I belong to RSD's CSIP Finance Committee, through which I was able to obtain line item costs for RSD's current grass maintenance expenditures and what they've been told they will spend on maintenance of synthetic turf fields. I recreated the line items in Excel, then compared it with a rough estimate from a professional landscaping company, who is not only cheaper, but better in the short- and long-run for our children. His professional opinion is that natural grass can withstand the wear and tear of the district's school sports and that it can be done without the cost, risks and other negative effects of synthetic turf.

*What you will find is that although crumb rubber is given the attention on health issues, it is but **scratching the surface of the problem of synthetic turf fields.***

This paper discusses the overall cost when considering installation and maintenance, which is not presented by those in favor of synthetic turf. In addition, it provides information about the other risks of synthetic turf, including extreme temperatures, lead exposure, possible cancer risk, synthetic turf's role in Staph/MRSA infections, and infills. Players' preferences, injury rates and inadequacies of current studies are also presented. Finally, the option for natural grass and organic lawn care are given, along with actual successes. What you will find is that although crumb rubber is given the attention on health issues, it is but scratching the surface of the problem of synthetic turf fields. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to give the public the truth about the all-encompassing health problem synthetic turf fields create.

REAL IS BETTER THAN FAKE, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE CAN AFFORD IT

Reality: It is scary to think that as a parent, you may have exposed your child to lead from a synthetic turf field, or put them at risk for heat-related illness, etc., but we cannot put our heads in the sand now that we have the information. We must do what is right for our children.

I know my own parents felt terrible that as children we ate food with pesticides, did not use enough sunscreen and did not wear seat belts enough, amongst other things. The research evolved. Now we know better so we do better. The same applies here.

Introduction: RSD and other school districts are considering installing synthetic turf fields. Natural grass has always been, and continues to prove to be, the best option for our children. As of 2014, RSD maintained their natural grass fields using trained in-house staff. RSD maintenance cost savings have been published, along with the cost of installation for synthetic turf fields at four high schools. However, no information has been presented on overall cost when considering installation and maintenance, the *true* cost to taxpayers.

In addition, no information on grass has been provided, including professional opinions outside landscaping companies, features/benefits, and cost comparison of installation and maintenance.

When analyzing the data, it is obvious that we can afford

grass. If a professional landscaping company is hired, the service they provide will allow for fields that can withstand wear and tear. Their years of experience and passion for grass (not to mention if they fail, they lose business!) produce successful results. The proof is in their clientele and the beating the fields withstand.

We cannot, however, afford to put our children at risk from extremely high temperatures, lead exposure, possible cancer risk and other known dangers via synthetic turf. The nation is calling for action on more studies to prove the safety of synthetic turf. Cancer can take years to reveal itself and we already know of the other health risks involved. Why risk anything else?

The choice is yours, but at least now you'll have all the facts.

Questions for RSD, Other Schools (*RSD has not been able to answer*)

Parents have a right to know to what their children are being exposed. The following are questions that need answering. Does anyone feel comfortable having children play on the fields when these questions remain unanswered, yet we know of the many dangers and risks they present already?

Parents have a right to know to what their children are being exposed. Questions need answering.

1. What data/studies are you relying on

synthetic turf fields are safe?

2. How will RSD prevent children's exposure to lead?
3. What information was presented to the school board about synthetic turf? Grass?
4. Was new grass turf with a drainage system ever considered as an alternative to synthetic turf?
5. How will RSD make certain our children are not exposed to lead?
6. How will RSD prevent heat-related illnesses?
7. How will RSD make certain that our children do not inhale fine particles?

Additional Questions for RSD, Other Schools

8. Understanding that there can be varying amounts of lead in turf fibers depending on turf fiber colors, in addition to field components other than turf fibers can contain even more lead than turf fibers, when will RSD complete lead testing on each field?
 - a. How will RSD disinfect fields due to vomit, blood, sweat, spit, feces, etc.?

Real is Better than Fake: Concerning the Dangers and Risks of Synthetic Turf Fields

- b.** Are fields treated with Antimicrobials at factory or on site by maintenance crew?
- c.** If using, how often will chemicals be sprayed?
- d.** If using, what chemical disinfectants are used on the field?



- e. How will RSD ensure fields are truly disinfected?
 - f. If using UVC treatment, how will RSD ensure that fields are truly disinfected?
 - g. What is the effect of these disinfectants on children including, but not limited to, cancer risk, respiratory effects, skin irritants?
9. What chemicals are in the runoff from RSD's fields?
- a. What is the effect on drinking water?
 - b. Will RSD use any herbicides or chemicals to prevent weeds growing on synthetic turf?
10. Do fields contain; what are the short- and long-term effects of the following:
- a. Flame retardants?
 - b. BPA?
 - c. Phthalates?
 - d. Bromine?
 - e. Zinc?
 - f. PVC?
 - g. PAHs?
11. Since the field is made from polyethylene plastic, a petroleum-derived product, what is the effect of the plasticizers used on children?
12. Binding agent is needed to combine cork oak with coconut husk particles; what is it?
- a. What makes the compound?
 - b. What is the effect on children?
13. Does the school have an ethical responsibility to delay installation until unanimous results are found that synthetic turf is safe for children?
14. Is RSD willing to go on record, stand behind the decision to install synthetic turf fields, in light of all of the known dangers and risks, including, but not limited to, lead exposure, heat-related illnesses, cancer risk, Staph/MRSA increased risk via turf burns, those of corkonut infill?

Challenges for RSD, Other Schools

15. Due to known extreme temperatures on synthetic turf fields, notably its frequent rise to temperatures from 120-150 degrees, record the temperature of each of the School's synthetic football fields before watering, and both 5 and 20 minutes after watering every day of the year. Release to the public.
16. Release to the public actual maintenance costs of synthetic turf football fields each year. Compare to what School was told by the synthetic turf industry.
17. Release TestAmerica lead test results showing Eureka's turf fibers contain lead.
- a. Considering that there can be more lead in field components than in turf fibers alone, complete third party lead testing of all field components of all fields. Do not allow FieldTurf to pay for the test as before.
 - i. Calculate the total amount of lead (in grams) of each field. This is the total amount of lead to which children will be exposed.
 - ii. Consult pediatricians. Release results, pediatrician remarks to the public.

Have third party respiratory testing conducted on corkonut infill. Do not allow corkonut manufacturer to pay for the test. Consult pediatricians. Release results, pediatrician remarks to the public.