

## HECANET May 2005

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### IN THIS ISSUE

#### EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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- (1) HECA Developments
- (2) WHO - World Health Assembly
- (3) WHO - Regional training workshops on indoor air pollution
- (4) WHO Children and POPs side-event during the first COP meeting of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
- (5) IPA/WHO/UNEP Workshop for African Pediatricians on Children's Health and the Environment
- (6) WHO/Europe – Children's environmental health work
- (7) International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage
- (8) WHO-PAHO: Health and Environmental Ministerial Meeting of the Americas (HEMA)
- (9) UNEP - Children's World Summit for the Environment
- (10) International Society of Doctors for the Environment Latin America/Argentinean Society of Doctors for the Environment
- (11) Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) Congressional briefing on The Crisis in Children's Environmental Health.
- (12) University of Minnesota President's 21st Century Interdisciplinary Conference Series Promoting Healthy Communities for Children
- (13) Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment: Conference on Children's Health and the Environment
- (14) Stony Brook University Environmental Health Program: Environmental Health Conference on Iraq-Amman
- (15) International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety (INCHES)

#### ARTICLES

Children's environmental health issues were extensively covered in May. Indoor air pollution was addressed particularly in the context of the home (in Africa - a study estimated that in the next 25 years, 10 million women and children in sub-Saharan Africa will die prematurely from the smoke produced by family cook-stoves; in China - effects of indoor decoration materials; and in the US - how inadequate housing contributes to poor health particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations). Indoor air quality in schools (in South Korea and US) and school buses was also covered. Articles on outdoor air pollution appeared in the press all around the world – from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Japan to Qatar, Ecuador, and the US. Quite a few of the American articles focused on diesel emissions, as well as the continuing debate regarding the regulation of mercury emissions. One new study also looked at evidence of an increase in preterm birth risk with exposure to PM10/SO2. Attention was devoted to increasing asthma rates in developing and developed countries – in South Africa, India, Canada and the US (including along the Rio Grande among native American children), as well as a new study which concluded that children living close to a major road are significantly more likely to have asthma than

children who live farther away. There were also a number of articles on dangers of environmental tobacco smoke and effects of smoking during pregnancy, including coverage of a study which indicated that smoking during pregnancy damages a baby's airways even before birth.

The majority of articles continued to focus on chemicals, highlighting evidence that a number of widely distributed chemicals can alter sexual and neurological development, impair reproduction, and undermine immune systems, and even looking at why puberty now begins at seven. Phthalates (used in plastics, lubricants and solvents, cosmetics, medical equipment, toys, paints and packaging) came under much scrutiny in the wake of research that found that exposure to the chemicals was linked to a higher risk of genital abnormalities in baby boys. New research also showed that exposure to harmful chemicals and drugs during critical developmental periods early in life may actually "reprogram" the way certain genes respond to the female hormone estrogen. This genetic reprogramming may determine whether people with a genetic predisposition for a disease actually develop the disease, such as various cancers. There was also new data on PBDE flame retardants in the U.S., which included the highest concentrations yet reported in humans. Articles also address asbestos and arsenic (primarily in treated wood in playgrounds). Numerous articles addressed childhood lead poisoning, including in Indonesia (leaded gasoline), Peru and Jamaica (lead smelters), and India, Kosovo, and North America – with CEC warning that, although lead pollution has been in decline since the phase-out of leaded gasoline, it remains the leading developmental toxicant released by industrial facilities. A reanalysis of data from research on lead's impact on children's intelligence found that the US economy benefited by approximately \$319 billion as a result of reductions in lead body burdens between 1976 and 1999. There were quite a few articles responding to US/EPA's delay with regard to completing required rules to protect children and construction workers from exposure to lead-based paint, as well as many local American articles covering lead in paint, ceramics, children's toys, and water. Articles dealing with pesticides ranged from Vietnam (Agent Orange), India (growth of organic cotton), to the US (with the House voting to bar US/EPA from conducting or accepting any studies that test pesticides on humans). Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) were in the news, with the meeting of the first Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention, which looked at adding four more chemicals to the 'dirty dozen'. Signatories also pledged to search for alternatives in order to eventually eliminate the use of the DDT in the fight against malaria. The majority of articles dealing with mercury this month dealt with the controversial link between mercury emissions and mercury in vaccines and autism, and with the continuing debate as to whether US/EPA went far enough with its March regulations to protect public health. 11 states and a coalition of NGOs are suing the Bush administration to block new rules allowing coal-burning utilities to trade rights to emit toxic mercury.

A good deal of articles addressed water (supply and quality) and sanitation issues, particularly with attention on Africa in the run-up to the G8 Summit and the five-year review of the UN Millennium Declaration in September. Water and sanitation was dealt with in articles addressing the situations in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Thailand, China, Swaziland, Senegal, Tanzania, Sao Tome and Principe, Iraq, and the US. Other articles covered the outcome of the WHO World Health Assembly, efforts to combat malaria, the effects of climate change (on nutrition/health and vector diseases), and skin cancer (related to ozone depletion). Summaries of articles grouped under the following themes appear below, with links to their full texts:

- (1) **AIR POLLUTION:** (a) Indoor air pollution, (b) Outdoor air pollution (c) Asthma (d) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking
  - (2) **CHEMICALS:** (a) General, (b) Lead, (c) Pesticides, (d) Persistent Organic Pollutants (e) Mercury
  - (3) **WATER AND SANITATION**
  - (4) **MISCELLANEOUS**
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**Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA)** is a world-wide alliance to reduce environmental risks to children's health that arise from the settings where they live, learn, play, and sometimes work, by providing knowledge, increasing political will, mobilizing resources, and catalysing intense and urgent action.

**HECANET** is an international mailing list dedicated to promoting healthy environments for children. The list provides updates on the activities of the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) and its members, as well as an overview of media coverage of children's environmental health issues and relevant meetings, research findings and information and advocacy resources.

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## **EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **(1) HECA Developments**

A fact sheet on '[The environment and health for children and their mothers](#)', which was prepared for World Health Day in April, is now available in English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic and Russian via WHO's children's environmental health web-site.

### **(2) WHO - World Health Assembly**

The World Health Assembly, which oversees the work of the UN World Health Organization (WHO), adopted a number of key resolutions affecting global public health at its annual session, including strategies on global immunization and cancer prevention and control. Highlights of the meeting also included adoption of the revised International Health Regulations that govern national and international response to disease outbreaks, and the approval of the programme budget for 2006-2007.

Of particular note from the children's environmental health perspective, was a [speech by His Excellency, Mr Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives](#) which focused on the effects of tsunami and climate change on the country. Some quotes: "I shudder to think of the thousands who die daily in sub-Saharan Africa, all from preventable diseases. In addition, millions of children in polluted cities die each year from acute respiratory infection".... "There is much that is said these days about global warming, but not nearly enough about the health impacts of climate change. Agenda 21, the blueprint for sustainable development in the 21st

century, stressed as its foremost principle, the protection of human health, and emphasized the close nexus between health and the environment”... “One might belong to a rural village or a bustling city; live in a slum or in a mansion; work in a farm or in a factory; or dwell in a mud hut on a delta or in a hamlet on the hilltop; but the state of the global environment has a profound effect on each and every person’s health. According to WHO statistics, over five million children die every year from illnesses and other conditions caused by the environment in which they live, learn and play. Acute respiratory infections aggravated by air pollution, diarrhoea from contaminated food and water, and malaria are the leading causes of death of children in the developing world. I believe all these are preventable deaths, which constitute a great loss to humanity”.... “For a country like the Maldives, the environment poses particular health-related challenges.... water and sanitation and water management remain problems that require urgent attention. Indeed, in our quest to achieve our stated Millennium Development Goals, the most important challenges are those related to water and sanitation, and nutrition. Not only does our environment affect morbidity, but it also threatens the very survival of the nation. The most serious form of degradation of the environment is of course global warming, where the rising temperatures could kill the coral which forms the basis of our habitat. We would indeed suffer economic ruin if corals die, but it would also starve the nation of essential supplies of fish which forms part of the staple diet. Moreover, global warming would also alter the epidemiological pattern, with an increase in vector-borne diseases and the emergence of more virulent forms of tropical diseases. And perhaps what is worse, as the seas rise, the water aquifers and the soil are likely to be poisoned by excess salination”... “The links between the environment and health show that addressing the challenges in both areas calls for a global partnership, where everyone becomes part of the solution and none a problem... At the end of the day, prevention is still better than cure. And let that be our goal in promoting environmental health”.

### **(3) WHO - Regional training workshops on indoor air pollution**

WHO is organizing a series of [regional training workshops on indoor air pollution](#) and household energy monitoring in 2005. These 5-day training workshops are intended to empower governmental and non-governmental agencies to evaluate the impact of their intervention projects on indoor air pollution levels, health and wellbeing, and the socioeconomic situation of the household. The first of these training workshops was held in Antigua, Guatemala from 2-6 May 2005 and jointly organized by WHO, the Pan American Health Organization, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Center for Entrepreneurship in International Health and Development (CEIHD) at the University of Berkeley. The 36 participants included government representatives as well as members of universities and NGOs from Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Panama, Mexico, Costa Rica and Peru. Specific modules addressed principles in study design and ethical considerations, indoor air pollution monitoring, the assessment of health and well-being, socioeconomic impacts and technology performance through presentations as well as practical and hands-on training. Based on these, participants developed a draft evaluation strategy for their household energy intervention projects or programmes. For further information please contact [Eva Rehfuess](#). All the workshop materials will be published shortly on the [initiative’s web-site](#).

### **(4) WHO Children and POPs side-event during the first COP meeting of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**

A side-event entitled 'Children and POPs - Protecting our Most Precious Resource: Enabling children to secure a safer, cleaner and healthier world' was held on 4 May 2005 in Punta del Este, Uruguay. One of the main objectives of the Stockholm Convention is to protect human health and the environment from the harmful impact of persistent organic pollutants. In Articles 7 and 10 the Convention refers to the potential effects on vulnerable population groups and to the need to develop and implement, especially for women and children, educational and public awareness programmes. In view of the above, the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment of Uruguay, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS), organized a special event on the special vulnerability of children and on the need to take concerted action. The programme included statements by distinguished speakers and authorities, the presentation of a documentary and the lively participation of a children's choir. For more information on the Stockholm Convention and the meeting, please visit the [Convention's web-site](#) and the available press-backgrounder on [UNEP's web-site](#).

Members of the Head Table included: Arq. M Arana, Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment of Uruguay and President of the COP; Dr. M. Muñoz, Minister of Public Health, Uruguay; Dr. K. Toepfer, Executive Director UNEP; Dr. K. Leitner, ADG/SDE WHO; Dr Barros, representing WR Uruguay and Prof. Dr Schlottmann, representing the IFCS. Arq. Arana welcomed all participants to the special event and Dr. Muñoz stressed the importance of addressing children's health, as they represent the future in all countries. Dr. Toepfer expressed his appreciation that issues of the convention that require special attention were being addressed. Dr. Leitner welcomed participants on behalf of WHO. Dr. Schlottman stressed that children's health is an issue of great concern to the IFCS that was pleased to contribute to the preparation of this event. All members of the Head Table stressed the need to protect children's health and future generations, as witnessed in the children from the Music School of San Carlos de Maldonado, present in the audience. The Video Rap on Chemical Safety in a Vulnerable World with Spanish subtitles (translation provided by WWF) was shown. Invited speakers included: Dr. Atilio Savino (Director of Environment at the Ministry of Health and Environment, Argentina), Dr. R. Ubilla (Director of Public Health Services, Ministry of Health, Chile), Dr. L. Corra (representing IPEN) and Ms. M. Laudares (ABIQUIM, Brazil, representing Industry). They referred to the different initiatives that their respective sectors were undertaking in order to promote children's environmental health and to address POPs-related issues.

A documentary on Children and POPs was previewed at the event. It was prepared by the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment of Uruguay with the support of the IFCS, WHO/HQ and WR Uruguay. The documentary was done on the basis of interviews made to children from a rural school (Las Violetas, Canelones, Uruguay) who received information on chemicals, on POPs and on potential risks posed to health and the environment. Children shared their views, making very interesting comments. The audience -of about 300 participants- appreciated this documentary. The evening ended very lively, with a performance of the children's choir of the Music School of San Carlos de Maldonado, who offered a number of songs around the theme of children's, rights, the need to learn, protecting the environment and aspirations for the future.

### **(5) IPA/WHO/UNEP Workshop for African Pediatricians on Children's Health and the Environment**

An important workshop will be held on October 12-14, 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya. In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Pediatric Association (IPA) is sponsoring a 3-day workshop on Children's Health and the Environment. During this workshop, providers will learn about the harmful effects of air pollution, water contamination and unsafe food on the health of children. The course is designed for African doctors who plan to teach other providers about children's health and the environment. We will discuss how pediatricians from countries throughout Africa can work together to help improve the environment for tomorrow's children. This issue is a cross-cutting one that may be every bit as important as nutrition in its overall impact on child health. Please [contact IPA](#) if you would like to place your name on a list to receive additional information and a registration form for this workshop.

### **(6) WHO/Europe – Children's environmental health work**

[Building up a 'Train the trainers' network. Rome, Italy, 8-10 June 2005](#): As a follow up to the commitments made at the Budapest Ministerial Conference last June, WHO is providing training to participants from several European countries on children's health and environment issues, to enable them to train other people in their countries. Participants from 19 countries will learn about the "windows of vulnerability" in children, the harmful effects of air pollution, how and when exposure to pesticides occurs, the effects of different chemicals and other related topics. This training is part of a series and is carried out in collaboration with WHO headquarters within a WHO global effort to promote the recognition, assessment and study of environmental factors that affect the health and development of children. More information is available on [WHO-Europe's web-site](#).

[The joint EEA/WHO children educational computergame Honoloko](#) received top award at Worldfest film and video festival in Houston, Texas. Honoloko won the gold award in the Children's Interactive Entertainment category. The game, launched at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in 2004, addresses many of the issues under discussion at the Conference, showing the impacts of everyday choices on health and the environment.

[The Budapest collection, a comprehensive e-library of materials on environmental hazards to children's health](#) on CD-Rom containing monographs, reports, journal articles as well as press and promotional materials published between the Third (1999) and the Fourth (2004) Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health was positively evaluated by the CD-ROM Review Program of the Asian Development Bank Institute's (ADB). The collection, available on CD and soon also online, was reviewed by an independent expert within the ADB's CD-ROM Review Program and got a good overall rate (3.5 points, top rate: 5). Strengths include it is multi-lingual (English, French, German, Russian, Spanish), the interactive search options, and a mention of two specific items (a very well done and vividly presented video highlighting first-hand the experiences of young waste-pickers, and some good interactive games).

### **(7) International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage**

Simple techniques for treating water at home and storing it in safe containers could save a huge number of child lives every year. Home treatment options (e.g. filtration or disinfection using

chlorine or even sunlight) are cheap, dramatically improve water quality, and can be deployed rapidly. In this context, the WHO-led International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage convened its [3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting 30-31 May 2005](#), in Bangkok, Thailand, attended by approximately 120 participants representing government ministries and agencies, NGOs, international organizations, the private sector, and academia. The meeting, which was held back-to-back with the 2005 International Symposium on Household Water Management, 1-2 June 2005, came at a critical juncture for home treatment, a time when household approaches are being carried forward by increasing political recognition and a growing body of scientific evidence.

Network working groups reviewed work and established priorities for 2005/2006. These included the development of resources to assist implementers select household water treatment and safe storage (HWTS) technology and program options. The Bangkok meeting included a two day technical symposium covering the state of the art in HWTS technologies and systems, and tackling key challenges, including those relating to acceptability, affordability, and long-term utilization. Key regional issues, such as HWTS use following emergencies, and arsenic removal, were also presented. More information, including a full report will be posted very soon on the [Network website](#). Please contact [Bruce Gordon of the Network Secretariat](#) for more information.

**(8) WHO-PAHO: Health and Environmental Ministerial Meeting of the Americas (HEMA)**

The Organization of American States is organizing the 3rd Meeting of Ministers of Health and Environment of the Americas. (HEMA) in Mar del Plata, Argentina, on June 14-17, 2005. The conference will be entitled, "Towards the Millennium Development Goals Achievement". The aim of the Third Meeting is to prepare and agree joint strategies to facilitate the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Objectives in the countries of the region. The Ministers of Health and Environment of the Americas will review the progress of actions carried out in compliance with agreements adopted in the two initial meetings (Washington 1995 and Ottawa 2002). Successful experiences and difficulties on environment and health will be identified. Useful information will be shared to develop national and regional strategies. The three main topics in the agenda of the Ministerial meeting will be water and sanitation, chemical safety and children environmental health. More information is available on the HEMA [web-site](#).

**(9) UNEP - Children's World Summit for the Environment**

UNEP and the Aichi Prefectural Government of Japan will host the first [Children's World Summit for the Environment](#) in Toyohashi and Toyota cities, Japan, from 26 to 29 July 2005. The Summit will bring together up to 1,000 children, aged 10 to 14 years, and adult chaperones to review the implications of environmental problems to their livelihood. The Summit will endeavour to increase children's understanding of environmental issues through the sharing of experiences and opinions and will provide an opportunity for them to collectively voice their concerns for the environment. It will also inspire them to initiate and implement community environmental projects and to remove ethnic barriers while creating new relationships that will last well beyond the Summit.

**(10) International Society of Doctors for the Environment Latin America (ISDE-Latin America)/Argentinean Society of Doctors for the Environment (AAMA)**

Details on AAMMA's project on "Measuring the Environmental Health Impacts on Children's Health in the Southern Cone" Year II: can be obtained from the [AAMMA project's web-site](#) or by contacting [the Secretariat](#). AAMMA is also supporting a project on "Participation in the Argentina National Implementation Plan (NIP) of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, focusing in Children Chemical Safety".

September 24th-25th, 2005: Vienna, Austria, International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) is inviting all ISDE members and activists on health and environment to its General Assembly that will take place in Vienna after the SAICM meeting (September 19th-24th). The main aims of the meeting are networking and exchange of ideas. During the event, voting will take place (restricted to ISDE affiliates) and activities and projects will be presented (open to non-ISDE members). To find more information please visit the [ISDE web-site](#).

June 2nd – 4th, 2005: Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada: ISDE.LA-AAMMA's experts are invited as key speakers for the opening session by the Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association, the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development to the Conference "Plan It Quality National Conference 2005: Environments in Early Learning and Child Care – Linking Research Policy and Practice". AAMMA-ISDE.LA representatives will lecture on "Children Chemical Safety: taking actions: IFCS Recommendations". A workshop on capacity building for health care providers will be also offered by AAMMA-ISDE.LA experts.

Activities in May (Details of these, as well as activities carried out in April are available from [the Secretariat](#)):

May 31st, 2005: Buenos Aires, Argentina, AAMMA-ISDE.LA was invited to coordinate the panel on Children's Health and Environment at the National Workshop for Civil Society Participation, in the framework of the activities planned for the 3rd Meeting of Ministers of Health and Environment of the Americas. The event was addressed for civil society organizations and represented a great opportunity for them to share their concerns and opinions about which are the main environmental health issues in Argentina related to the three main topics of the meeting: Children's Health and Environment, Solid Waste & Water Resources and Sound Chemical Management. National recommendations emerged for the Ministers and a second workshop will take place in June 14th with the NGOs delegates of the other regions of the Americas to merge the documents and work in the final paper to be presented at the official meeting.

May 18th/19th & 24th/26th, 2005: Buenos Aires, Argentina: AAMMA experts team developed the Module on Health and Environment at the Master on Public Health at the Institute for Human Development and Health of the Municipal Doctors of the City of Buenos Aires, recognized by the National Ministry of Health and the Secretary of Health of the City of Buenos Aires. The course was addressed to health care administrators.

May 2nd – 6th, 2005: Punta del Este, Uruguay: UNEP organized the First Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention (COP-1). In this conference, governments, representatives from international organizations, industry, academia and environmental NGOs assessed national chemicals management programs in the framework of the Stockholm Convention on POPs. AAMMA-ISDE.LA participated in the meeting as a member of IPEN. April 29th – May 1st,

2005: The International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) organized its General Assembly in Punta del Este a week before the COP-1. AAMMA-ISDE.LA participated as member of IPEN.

**(11) Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) Congressional briefing on The Crisis in Children's Environmental Health.**

[The Crisis in Children's Environmental Health](#): June 10, 2005, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., 406 Dirksen Senate Office Building (Washington D.C.). The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) is holding a Congressional briefing on The Crisis in Children's Environmental Health: "The youngest members of society -- children -- are among the most vulnerable to environmental health hazards. This briefing will review some of the latest scientific findings on the connection between air pollution and health problems in children. 20 million Americans, including 9 million children suffer from asthma. Air pollution may cause asthma not just exacerbate it. Smog limits the development of healthy lungs in children. New preliminary estimates from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicate that more than 630,000 newborns each year may have increased risk of learning disabilities associated with methyl mercury exposure inside their motherswombs. Damage to children's health is a byproduct of the country's current dependence on fossil fuels and end-of-the-pipestandards that fail to take into account the smaller body weight of children and their unique routes of exposure. The sensitivity of children needs to be considered while drafting environmental regulations and setting national priorities. Preventing illness and chronic disease in children will result in substantial health cost savings and reduced absenteeism from school. Moreover, initiatives that promote cleaner energy and alternative transportation can provide long-term solutions to protect children's health in addition to other national benefits including economic, energy and environmental security. Topics to be discussed include: Findings from a ten-year study on the effect of air pollution on lung development in children; A review of recent scientific literature linking air pollution to adverse health outcomes in children; A discussion on the impacts of mercury exposure on children; A discussion of California's Children's Environmental Health Program and the state's efforts to ensure that air quality standards protect children's health. For more information, please see [EESI's web-site](#) or contact [Theresa Murzyn](#), tel: 202-662-1884.

**(12) University of Minnesota President's 21st Century Interdisciplinary Conference Series Promoting Healthy Communities for Children**

September 26-27, 2005, University of Minnesota, Continuing Education Center St. Paul, Minnesota. Unhealthy and unsafe environments put children at risk in many ways from toxicants in the air, food, and water to inadequate/overcrowded housing; unsafe, inaccessible spaces for recreation; geographic concentrations of poverty and wealth; traffic dangers; differential access to social, political and material resources; school violence; discrimination; social isolation; powerful media influences .the list could go on. From conception through adolescence, children are disproportionately affected by exposure to environmental risks because they have greater physiological and psychological vulnerabilities during stages of rapid and formative development, and they have less power to influence and shape their environment. This conference will examine critical aspects of the environment as they affect the health and well-being of children and adolescents. Conference plenary and breakout sessions will be organized around three broad themes: (i) the natural environment including the quality of our air, water, and soil; exposure to lead, environmental tobacco smoke, and noise; industrial waste disposal; (ii) the built environment including parks, sidewalks, bikeways, transportation networks,

urban/suburban/rural planning and development, zoning regulations, housing codes, disability accessibility; and (iii) the social environment including social processes and conditions related to economic and political power and decision making; human connections at an ecological level, such as social capital, efficacy, and cohesion; family relationships; safe schools; discrimination due to race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender, age. The audience will be multidisciplinary, reflecting the variety of conference co-sponsors and the many disciplines involved in addressing environmental impacts on children's health. Attendees will include researchers, practitioners, public health professionals, and graduate students. Abstracts are invited for poster and oral presentations in two broad categories: 1) studies reporting evidence of the impact of adverse environmental exposures on children's health, and 2) evidence-based programs, policies, or interventions that have been implemented to reduce risk exposure and enhance protective factors in the environment. Submissions are due by April 15, 2005. Please [contact the University](#).

**(13) Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment: Conference on Children's Health and the Environment**

A Conference on Children's Health and the Environment will be held on Saturday, October 1, 2005 in Baltimore, Maryland. The conference will focus on: Emerging Issues in Children's Environmental Health; Childhood Obesity & the Environment; School Environmental Health Problems; Asthma; Mold Issues; Outcomes of Environmental Exposures \* birth defects, learning problems; Risk Communication; and the Resources of a Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit. CME or CEU credits for physicians or nurses can be earned. The Conference is sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment, the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, and Region 3 Environmental Protection Agency. For more information contact [Aurora Amoah](#) at the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health & the Environment.

**(14) Stony Brook University Environmental Health Program: Environmental Health Conference on Iraq-Amman**

International Environmental Health Conference on Iraq, 19-22 September 2005, Amman, Jordan, hosted by Stony Brook University Environmental Health Program, New York and the Agency of International Development (US/AID). Military conflicts, long-term international sanctions, isolation and rapid industrialization have turned Iraq's environment into an unprecedented, environmental disaster adversely affecting human health in Iraq and the surrounding countries. Consequently, the Iraqi healthcare system has been overwhelmed with a variety of environmentally related acute and chronic disorders, including respiratory and diarrheal diseases and adverse reproductive outcomes. Recent scientific reports have indicated significant increases in the incidence of cancer, physical and mental disabilities and congenital abnormalities. The situation has further deteriorated in recent years due to severely restricted access to modern scientific and medical knowledge and the almost complete isolation of Iraqi researchers, scientists and university faculty from their peers in the international community.

This conference will address environmental issues facing Iraq using the latest research and scientific studies and attempt to develop recommendations to address these problems. The conference will provide a venue for Iraqi and international scientists to present research work and advances related to environmental health in Iraq. It will allow Iraqi medical professionals to

exchange information with their peers from the international community and it will help bridge the isolation of the Iraqi medical and environmental community by facilitating interactions and collaboration with international attendees. Additionally, the conference will stimulate long-term collaborative efforts among Iraqi scientists from different institutions or disciplines and with their foreign peers, thus encouraging research work and studies addressing various environmental and health problems affecting the region. Iraqi researchers and scientists will present the most recent research in the various disciplines related to health and the environment.

Children in Iraq: Although all segments of the population in Iraq have suffered from environmental contaminants, children have been especially affected. Due to neglect, repeated military conflicts, and international sanctions, over 500,000 children have died in the past decade. The primary cause of death among children is malnourishment and infectious diseases which arise due to a lack of basic health and sanitation services. The situation is worsened by congenital malformations and defects caused by exposure to radioactive material and chemicals associated with wars. In the post-Gulf War period, the infant mortality rate rose to 103/1000 due to the severe health deterioration in the country in the 1990's. This is nearly double the ratio prior to that period. The mortality rate of children under five years of age in Iraq is now the worst in the world. UNICEF reports that Iraq ranks 126th out of 174 on the list of UN Human Development Index, while it ranked 50th out of 130 on the list in 1990. A variety of environmentally related chronic diseases are emerging among children due to their ongoing exposure to environmental contaminants. The most serious issue is diarrhea from water contamination, which proves fatal in many cases. Over 50% of the country's water supply is contaminated because the infrastructure and water purification system were destroyed during the recent war. Upper respiratory tract disease from exposure to air contaminants is another significant concern. Additionally, many cases of cancer and congenital abnormalities among children are believed to be environmentally related. It is expected that the Environmental Health and Resource Centers established through the SBU-HEAD program will enable Iraqi specialists to study and prevent many of the environmental health problems currently facing children in Iraq. For more information, please visit the [conference/program web-site](#).

#### **(15) International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety (INCHES)**

Call for fact-sheets: INCHES received quite a few fact-sheets or links to fact-sheets on the internet. These fact-sheets are mainly in English. INCHES is calling members to send their available fact-sheets in other languages to be added to the database. They could be in any language, ranging from lead poisoning, asthma, allergies, chemical, ventilation at school, etc. INCHES is trying to build a very complete overview which we also share with the HECA network. Please [send an electronic version](#) or hard copy of the fact-sheets, as soon as possible, to the INCHES address: INCHES, P. O. Box 163, 6950 AD Dieren, the Netherlands. Please try not to postpone your assistance as we would like to have a very substantial database of factsheets available in the next month for everyone. More information on INCHES is available on the [network's web-site](#).

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**ARTICLES**

## **(1) AIR POLLUTION: (a) Indoor air pollution**

[In Africa, Lifting the Pall of Smoke From Cooking](#) A recent study estimated that in the next 25 years, 10 million women and children in sub-Saharan Africa will die prematurely from the smoke produced by the most basic and comforting of sources: the family cookstove. [Registration Required]. Susan P. Williams. Washington Post. 23 May 2005.

[Schools face stricter indoor air quality rules](#) Schools will be subject to stricter indoor air quality regulations from the second half of this year to ensure the health and safety of students. The aim is to address poor air quality inside school buildings due to poor ventilation or the discharge of harmful chemicals from toxic building materials. Park Jung-youn. Seoul Korea Times, South Korea. 27 May 2005.

[Mapping the Air in Public Schools](#) A program at Duke University's has pledged to give children's environmental health the attention it deserves and is proactively implementing projects to create preventive environmental interventions that protect children before they become sick. Tanya Tillett. Environmental Health Perspectives. May 2005.

[Decorating homes may cause leukemia](#) Pollutants in paint and other materials can cause blood diseases, including leukaemia, said a doctor treating seven-year-old Hong Hong in Harbin, who has been diagnosed with the illness. "Children have a much lower immunity than adults and can be affected more by the harmful smell released by indoor decoration materials." Li Fangchao. China Daily. 26 May 2005.

[Dwelling Disparities: How Poor Housing Leads to Poor Health](#) Research is focusing on how inadequate housing contributes to poor health. Low-income and minority populations are known to be especially at risk. CEHI research focuses on identifying interventions that will prevent harmful environmental exposures in children. Ernie Hood. Environmental Health Perspectives. May 2005.

[Health, Equity, and the Built Environment](#) The environmental justice movement has focused attention on the needs of disenfranchised populations. In documenting that environmental hazards may target vulnerable populations, it helped draw attention to children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and other groups. Howard Frumkin. Environmental Health Perspectives. May 2005.

[On Closer Inspection: Learning to Look at the Whole Home Environment](#) It's supposed to be a harbor, a haven--it's home. But some home environments can cause serious health problems. A 'Breathe Easy at Home' program in Boston resulted in housing repairs that resulted in a significant reduction of a child's asthma symptoms. Angela Spivey. Environmental Health Perspectives. May 2005.

[California looks at tackling indoor air quality](#) Americans spend nearly 90% of their time indoors, primarily at home. EPA ranks indoor air pollution among the top five environmental risks to human health. Premature deaths, lost worker productivity, and medical treatment due to indoor

air pollution cost California \$45 billion annually. Kris Christen. Environmental Science & Technology. 26 May 2005.

Is your house a home to hidden health risks? Indoor air can become a smog of synthetic chemicals, even in a well-maintained modern home. "I make the children take off their shoes before they come in." Corydon Ireland. Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, New York.

Study finds unhealthy air inside school buses Children riding in school buses are exposed to more harmful fumes inside the bus than outside, a study has found. Exhaust produced by diesel engine school buses especially older ones is leaking back into the cabins, exposing children to particles that have been shown to cause cancer and lung problems. Shirley Hsu. Whittier Daily News, California. 6 May 2005.

Parents worry about school bus safety, emissions Recent studies about the harmful conditions on school buses have some Malibu parents asking questions about the nine-bus fleet that serves Malibu's public schools. Hans Laetz. Malibu Times, California. 12 May 2005.

## **(b) Outdoor air pollution**

New emissions study to focus on children Japan's Environment Ministry will conduct a 5-year survey on the impact of vehicle emissions on human health, especially of primary school pupils. Combining data will lead to estimates on the level of pollution children are exposed to and examine correlations between air pollution and damage to health. United Press International. Washington Times. 3 May 2005.

Acute Respiratory Diseases and Carboxyhemoglobin Status in School Children of Quito, Ecuador Examining the relationship between ARI and COHb concentrations in school-age children in Quito's urban and suburban areas, findings provide strong evidence of the relation between CO exposure and susceptibility to respiratory infections. Bertha Estrella, et al. Environmental Health Perspectives May 2005.

Developed nations urged to stem air pollution deaths An air quality expert says the emissions that cause global warming are also causing millions of premature deaths around the world each year. Poor quality fuel and outdated combustion methods in third world countries are causing deadly air pollution. ABC News, Australia. 4 May 2005.

Air quality in Pakistani cities alarming The air quality in six major Pakistani cities has deteriorated rapidly, says an official study, with the number of vehicles there having increased by almost 300 percent in five years. An increased mortality rate and rise in diseases have also been attributed to air pollution and morbidity, besides rising health costs. Indo-Asian News Service, South Asia. 10 May 2005.

Old vehicles set to face tougher tests Stringent environmental regulations in Qatar were announced. Motor vehicles are significant sources of pollution, producing fumes that include carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons. These can react to produce ozone and

smog which can aggravate health problems. The elderly and the very young are particularly at risk. [Doha Gulf Times](#), Qatar. 24 May 2005.

[Calcutta bans dirty old vehicles](#) Authorities in the Indian city of Calcutta have ordered all vehicles manufactured before 1990 off the roads unless they convert to green fuel. A recent study by the Calcutta-based Chittaranjan Cancer Research Institute and Calcutta University indicated that close to 50% of the city's residents suffer from major respiratory disorders. Subir Bhaumik. [BBC](#), UK. 17 May 2005.

[Cuddalore industrial area 'unfit to breathe in.'](#) Activists in Cuddalore have demanded severe action against the chemical industries housed in the SIPCOT industrial area here for spewing toxic pollutants in the air. Many of the toxic gases are known to retard the mental and physical growth of children and may result in birth defects and reproductive disorders. Jaya Menon. [Kolkata Statesman](#), India. 10 May 2005.

[How hazardous are the brickfields?](#) the serious and deadly effects of the brickfield on the environment including humans, particularly children, must have stirred everybody's senses. As per the report, some experts opined, "All these symptoms are the consequences of the environmental disaster caused due to the innumerable brickfields in this area." Md Mahbubar Rahman. [Star](#), Bangladesh. 13 May 2005.

[The luxury of breathing](#) Today's air, especially over our cities, is a dangerous concoction of smoke from cars, factories and other sources. Our bodies can tolerate only so much. When there is pollution overload, we get sick and our lives are diminished. The impacts are most severe on children, the elderly and those with respiratory problems. Editorial. [Santa Maria Times](#), California. 1 May 2005.

[Fighting for air](#) This past week, the American Lung Association released a grim report about our nation's air quality and, perhaps not surprisingly, Queens flunked. These waste sites are renown for being located primarily in lower-income neighborhoods, where rates of respiratory ailments among children are now disproportionately high. Editorial. [Queens Chronicle](#), New York. 6 May 2005.

[Time Series Analysis of Air Pollution and Preterm Birth in Pennsylvania](#) Small increases in preterm delivery risk in relation to spatial gradients of air pollution have been reported, but studies may have controlled inadequately for individual factors. This study gives evidence of an increase in preterm birth risk with exposure to PM10/SO2. Sharon Sagiv et al. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#) May 2005.

[Washington governor signs bill requiring cleaner cars](#) Gov. Gregoire signed a bill that will bring strict California car-emissions standards to Washington state. "This is one of the single most important pieces of environmental legislation we've had in a long time ... It's going to have direct benefits to the health of our children and our elderly." Rebecca Cook. [Associated Press](#). 6 May 2005.

[Bill addresses diesel pollution](#) Diesel pollution is linked to premature deaths, heart attacks and asthma attacks in New Jersey each year. Children riding school buses are affected the most by diesel emissions. The children's exposure aggravates respiratory problems such as asthma and acute bronchitis, among other breathing problems. Stephen R. Gregg III. Asbury Park Press, New Jersey. 19 May 2005.

[Measure cuts diesel emissions](#) Terrence Dopp. Gloucester County Times, New Jersey. 20 May 2005.

[Diesel fumes from truck lot next to Bronx school cause an uproar](#) A diesel truck lot next to a school in the Bronx has parents and local leaders complaining. Residents fear diesel fumes are aggravating an already high asthma rate in the South Bronx. The way the asthma and the cancer rate are accelerating, that's our biggest concern. NY 1 TV, New York. 17 May 2005.

[State has diesel dilemma](#) With smog and soot fouling the Connecticut's air and the lungs of its citizens, legislators focused on cleaning up diesel engines and their exhaust as one way of lessening the pollution. Nearly 9% of children in grades K-5 in Connecticut suffer from asthma. In the inner cities, the childhood rates are even higher. Dateline NBC. 4 May 2005.

[Old Lyme seeking expert advice on diesel fumes from school buses](#) Idling school buses often spew diesel exhaust into the air. The dangers of diesel exhaust to children are documented in a 2002 report entitled, "Children's Exposure to Diesel Exhaust on School Buses" by Environment and Human Health Inc. [Purchase required]. Patricia Daddona. New London Day, Connecticut. 5 May 2005.

[Big Island volcano is big polluter; health effects under study](#) Kilauea volcano is by far Hawaii's worst air polluter. Even without extensive data, residents have long suspected that vog exposure is dangerous. During "bad air days," schools routinely keep asthmatics and other sensitive students indoors and sometimes cancel outdoor sporting events. Peter Serafin. Associated Press. 17 May 2005.

### **(c) Asthma**

[Asthma swallows more children](#). More young Capetonians are falling prey to this chronic disease. South Africa has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest rate of death from asthma in the world, pointing to both under-diagnosis and under-treatment. Locally, as many as one in every 10 children suffer from asthma, which may well make it the country's most common chronic illness. Cape Argus Independent, South Africa. 5 May 2005.

[A third of world's asthma patients in India](#). India accounts for a third of the world's 115 million asthma patients - and environmental pollution and poor awareness are some of the reasons. A survey in Hyderabad found around 6% of the patients in the age group of 0-18. One in three asthmatic children misses school every day. Indo-Asian News Service. WebIndia123.com. 3 May 2005.

[Study shows lungs choked by smoke](#) Bappa Majumdar. Calcutta Telegraph, India. 3 May 2005.

[Residents want cleaner surroundings](#) Clean surroundings are half the battle won for keeping asthma at bay. Belgaum, earlier known for its clean and healthy atmosphere, is now becoming polluted and unhygienic due to growing population. [Registration required]. New India Press, India. 6 May 2005.

[Health on the Banks of the Rio Grande](#) A grant focused on environmental lung disease and Native Americans, particularly asthma among Native American schoolchildren. At one pueblo, 11.3% of children between ages 3 and 13 had been diagnosed with asthma, an incidence that was more than twice the national average for the same age group. Julia Barrett. Environmental Health Perspectives. May 2005.

[Childhood asthma on the rise](#) CDC data shows the prevalence of asthma from self-reported data increased by an estimated 160% from 1980 to 1994. Rates among children ages 5 to 14 increased by 74% in that same time period. "It definitely is better diagnosed, but I think there are environmental reasons for the increase as well." Rachele Treiber. Davenport Quad-City Times, Iowa. 13 May 2005.

[Children Living Near Major Roads At Higher Asthma Risk](#) Children living close to a major road are significantly more likely to have asthma than children who live farther away, according to a study. "These findings are consistent with an emerging body of evidence that local traffic around homes and schools may be causing an increase in asthma." Press Release. American Thoracic Society. 23 May 2005.

[Road Traffic Hikes Asthma Risk](#) United Press International. 24 May 2005.

[Study Links Living Close To Traffic And Asthma In Children](#) Mary Ann Childers. CBS2, Chicago. 24 May 2005.

[Study links asthma, freeway proximity](#) Cheryl Clark. Union-Tribune, San Diego. 24 May 2005.

[Study finds asthma, traffic link in children](#) [Subscription required]. Terry Weber. Globe and Mail, Canada. 24 May 2005.

[Struggling to breathe](#) Johnny's asthma has turned the family's life upside down. Surrounded by landfills, highways and other pollutants, many of Valenzuela's East Valley neighbors are plagued by a condition that steals their babies' breath and can turn their children shades of blue. Jennifer Radcliffe. Los Angeles Daily News. 16 May 2005.

[Fight of his young life](#) Air pollution and asthma are the bane of the Central Valley's children. Last month, the American Lung Association said children in the Northern San Joaquin Valley pay a high price for the region's inability to clear its air of pollution. Michael G. Mooney. Modesto Bee, California. 23 May 2005.

[Giving asthma the boot](#) In Canada, asthma affects about 3 million people, mainly children. Besides exercise, triggers can include allergies and pollutants. Each year, about 500 deaths in

Canada are attributed in part to asthma — and about 80 per cent of them are avoidable, researchers say. Paul Irish. Toronto Star, Ontario. 6 May 2005

#### **(d) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking**

[One in 6 babies put at risk by smoking parents](#) One in six babies is put at risk of cot death because the parents are smokers and share a bed with their child, a survey has found. Exposure to smoking in the house may make them more vulnerable to toxins released by bacteria in the nose and throat. [Purchase required]. Jeremy Laurance. London Independent, England. 11 May 2005.

[Smokers 'ignore risk to children'](#) Many parents are ignoring warnings about smoking near their children, NHS research suggests. Almost two-fifths (39%) of teenagers quizzed were exposed to smoke in the home when younger, while 13% were exposed to it in cars. The poll of 500 children coincides with the relaunch of adverts showing the risks of smoking near children. BBC, UK. 23 May 2005.

[Smoking stunts airway development](#) Smoking during pregnancy damages a baby's airways even before birth, research has shown. Experts found babies whose mothers smoked during pregnancy were born with smaller airways - making them more vulnerable to breathing problems. BBC, London. 24 May 2005.

[Smoking harms lungs of babies in the womb](#) Children whose mothers smoke during pregnancy may be born with breathing problems. Scientists have discovered that damage can be done to a child's lungs while it is still in the womb. It was already known that the children of smokers tended to be significantly lighter and smaller at birth. Rebecca Smith. London Evening Standard. 24 May 2005.

[Indoor pollution 6 times higher where smoking is allowed](#) Indoor air pollution is 6 times higher in bars and restaurants that allow smoking, a survey found. Microscopic particles can lodge in the lungs and cause cancer and respiratory problems. Particulates are especially hazardous to children, the elderly and people with heart and lung conditions. Jim Ritter. Chicago Sun-Times. 16 May 2005.

[Vitamin C might help protect fetuses of smoking women.](#) Any woman who smokes knows that she should quit when she gets pregnant, but some women simply cannot or will not kick the habit, despite the known health risks to themselves and their fetuses. 450,000 smoke-exposed infants born each year in the US. Tim Christie. Eugene Register Guard, Oregon. 3 May 2005.

[Vitamin C may protect fetus from ills of smoking](#) Lee Bowman. Scripps Howard News Service. 2 May 2005.

[Simple Questions Spot Kids at Secondhand Smoke Risk](#) Pediatricians and other health-care providers need only ask parents a few simple questions to reliably identify children at risk for exposure to secondhand smoke. Exposure impairs children's respiratory health, putting them at increased risk of pneumonia, asthma and ear infections, among other. HealthDayNews. ABC News. 4 May 2005.

[Smoking ban total for home daycares](#) Smoking will be banned in home daycare centres regulated by the government after the Liberals had a change of heart yesterday She had warned the law only prohibited smoking in regulated home daycare centres while children were present, potentially exposing them to dangerous second-hand smoke. Rob Ferguson. Toronto Star, Ontario. 6 May 2005.

[Mother's 20-a-day habit gave son lungs of a pensioner](#) Kelly Rickman, 23, a mother of four, was smoking 20 cigarettes a day in her home, causing her son to develop breathing difficulties. The constant smoke was aggravating a throat condition. During surgery, doctors were horrified to find his lungs looked like those of a lifelong smoker. Angus Howarth. Edinburgh Scotsman, Scotland. 19 May 2005.

[Little boy with lungs of a pensioner](#) Daily Mail, UK. 19 May 2005.

[Film tobacco promotion 'warning.'](#) The number of tobacco brand appearances in US films aimed at children has not fallen significantly despite an agreement to stop them, a study says. Before the deal 15% of films aimed at children showed tobacco brand names, or trademarks, while after it, 12% did. BBC, UK. 18 May 2005.

[More youth smoking](#) Tobacco use is currently on the rise among young people, according to Trinidad and Tobago Health Minister John Rahael. Rohandra John. Trinidad & Tobago Express, Trinidad and Tobago. 25 May 2005.

## **(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General**

[Cancer risk guidelines factor in children's vulnerabilities](#) EPA's new cancer risk guidance addresses for the first time the likelihood that children are more susceptible than adults to mutagenic carcinogens. EPA estimates that exposures to children less than 2 years old are 10 times as risky as adult exposures. Rebecca Renner. Environmental Science & Technology. 4 May 2005

[The facts on everyday poisons](#) Most people have no idea that their bodies are contaminated with synthetic chemicals found in everyday products. There is unequivocal evidence that a number of widely distributed chemicals can alter sexual and neurological development, impair reproduction, and undermine immune systems. Clifton Curtis. International Herald Tribune. 6 May 2005.

[Chemicals may damage male babies](#) Chemicals found in everyday products can harm male reproductive development, research suggests. Phthalates are used in plastics, lubricants and solvents, and are found in cosmetics, medical equipment, toys, paints and packaging. Researchers found exposure to the chemicals was linked to a higher risk of genital abnormalities in baby boys. BBC, London. 27 May 2005.

[Study Finds Genital Abnormalities in Boys](#) Marla Cone. Los Angeles Times. 27 May 2005.

[Studies link chemicals to genital, breast development](#) Jane Kay. San Francisco Chronicle. 27 May 2005.

[Chemicals found to impair baby boys' genitals](#) Seth Borenstein. Knight Ridder. 27 May 2005.

[Moms' cosmetics linked to sons' sexual development](#) Tom Meersman. Minneapolis Star Tribune. 27 May 2005.

[Ubiquitous chemical associated with abnormal human reproductive development](#) Scientific American. 27 May 2005

[Common chemical may cause defects in baby boys](#) Elizabeth Weise. USA Today. 27 May 2005.

[Toxin in plastics harming unborn boys](#) Ian Sample. London Guardian, England. 27 May 2005.

[Chemical May Inhibit Male Sex Development](#) Matt Crenson. Associated Press. 27 May 2005

[Study sees health risk in chemicals](#) Alan Bavley. Kansas City Star, Missouri. 27 May 2005.

[Fears over toy chemicals](#) Corinne Abrams. The Sun, UK. 27 May 2005.

[Chemical linked to abnormalities in boys](#) Susanne Quick. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wisconsin. 27 May 2005.

[Chemical linked to breast cancer](#) Tufts University researchers say a chemical widely used in plastic food containers may contribute to women developing breast cancer. It is the second report in a week to raise concerns about widely used chemicals. Research has also shown that phthalates, often found in plastics, affects the genital development of baby boys. UPI. Washington Times. 30 May 2005.

[Chemicals' toxicity debated](#) They're in soap, hair spray, baby toys, hand lotion, deodorant, vinyl upholstery, nail polish, perfume. Phthalate esters are so prevalent that most hygiene products and soft PVC plastics contain some. Most Americans have traces in their bodies, according to government reports. [Registration required]. Julie Sevrens Lyons. San Jose Mercury News, California. 18 May 2005.

[Toxic releases decline, but worst soups persist](#) Toxic pollutants in the air, soil, and water are coming down. But according to EPA some - mercury, dioxin, lead, and PCBs - remain an increasing problem. In 2003, mercury and mercury-compound releases jumped 41%. Mercury can cause brain and nervous-system damage in children and fetuses. Brad Knickerbocker. Christian Science Monitor. 17 May 2005.

[EPA: toxic pollution fell in 2003](#) Releases of toxic chemicals into the environment fell 6% in 2003, although the level of mercury rose 41 percent, to 7.4 million pounds, from metal mining and coal-fired electric utilities. The toxic metal can cause nerve damage, particularly in pregnant women, women of childbearing ages and young children. John Heilprin. Associated Press. 12 May 2005.

[Europe's rules forcing U.S. firms to clean up](#) Europe is at the vanguard of regulating toxics. US companies are struggling to meet the EU's tough stand. In tests, certain compounds used in the

US have altered hormones, caused cancer, triggered neurological changes in fetuses or damaged a newborn's reproductive development. [Registration Required] Marla Cone. Los Angeles Times. 16 May 2005.

[Sweden Leads Ban on Toxins](#) Laws serve as model for EU's restrictions on hundreds of chemicals in everyday products, such as hair sprays and computers. Most recently, they found that flame retardants used in plastic are accumulating rapidly in human breast milk. Marla Cone. Los Angeles Times. 16 May 2005.

[Toxic shock](#) We are surrounded by chemicals in the home and workplace, in appliances and furniture, in carpets and products we use to clean them. Although scientists are not unanimous over the effects of these chemicals, it has been suggested that they can affect unborn babies, disrupt hormones, and even cause cancer. [Purchase required]. Alice Klein. London Independent, England. 24 May 2005.

[Why puberty now begins at seven](#) In the western world children are reaching puberty at younger and younger ages - some girls at the age of seven. The reasons for this trend is unknown, although several theories have been suggested. "Another thing that might be important is environmental factors that mimic hormones, such as pesticides." Michelle Roberts. BBC, UK. 16 May 2005.

[Is it all those chemicals?](#) A public health team is studying 'low birth weight clusters' in and around Memphis, which has the country's highest infant death weight. They suspect environmental pollutants may be involved. "Children are more vulnerable in utero or shortly after birth." Aimee Edmondson. The Memphis Commercial Appeal, Tennessee. 5 May 2005.

[Bringing up baby](#) Do you have any information on reducing toxins for newborns? Reducing exposure to toxins is essential for all of us, but especially for the tiniest of our clan. According to EPA, due to their small body mass and rapid rate of growth, infants and children differ from adults both qualitatively and quantitatively in their exposure to toxins. Marti Matsch. Boulder Daily Camera, Colorado. 6 May 2005.

[A new record for PBDEs in people](#) The newest data on PBDE flame retardants in the U.S. include the highest concentrations yet reported in humans. Infants and toddlers are the most vulnerable population. There is a growing body of evidence showing that dust is a major source of exposure to people, especially children. Kellyn S.Betts. Environmental Science & Technology. 26 May 2005.

[Contaminated Arctic only looks pristine](#) From kelp to Inuit mothers' milk, all suffer from migration of industrial toxins. Book review: "Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic." Marla Cone wanted to know why some Inuit mothers carry such extraordinary loads of PCBs and mercury that their breast milk could be classified as hazardous waste. Julie Mayeda. San Francisco Chronicle. 22 May 2005.

[Launch of a PCB Inventory and Management Decision Supportive Tool](#) A toolkit was released to support decision making in PCB inventoring and management. PCBs can pose risks to the

reproductive, immune, and nervous systems and liver. PCBs fall under the scope of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions and are to be phased out by 2025. News Release. [Basel Secretariat – UNEP](#). 26 May 2005.

[Early Environmental Exposure May Set Stage for Cancer](#) There are most likely environmental influences that set these genes in motion. "Our work found that environmental exposure that occurs early in life, a long time before the cancer develops, might be determining which of these genetically susceptible individuals will develop cancer as an adult." Steven Reinberg. [HealthDay News](#). 31 May 2005.

[Harmful chemicals may reprogram gene response to estrogen](#) National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. [Medical News Today](#). 31 May 2005.

[Infancy 'determines cancer risk'](#) [BBC](#). 30 May 2005.

[In those genetically predisposed, 'developmental reprogramming' could explain cancer risk](#) News Release. [University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center](#). 31 May 2005.

[Some Adult Cancers May Be Put in Motion Before Birth](#) Jai A. Dennison. [Daily News Central](#). 30 May 2005.

[Fetuses suffer from extra oestrogen exposure](#) Pregnant women could be unwittingly exposing their unborn children to harmful amounts of the hormone oestrogen. Researchers have demonstrated that tiny quantities of this hormone, found in birth-control pills and some plastics, can cause serious deformities in male mouse fetuses. Roxanne Khamsi. [Nature](#). 4 May 2005.

[Concerns over 'female chemicals'](#) [BBC](#). 3 May 2005.

[Estrogen Imitator in Womb May Lead to Cancer in Men, Study Finds](#) Marla Cone. [Los Angeles Times](#). 3 May 2005.

[Heavy metal](#) Toxic heavy metals can weigh down a person's health, says Dr. Ross Myerson, medical director for occupational and environmental health at Washington Hospital Center. The effects of lead in children may not be seen until years after exposure. If lead enters 2-year-old children the metal can lower the children's IQ by the time they are 5 years old. Jen Waters. [Washington Times](#). 31 May 2005.

['Toxic chemicals' in celebrities](#) Potentially dangerous industrial chemicals were found in celebrities' blood tested for a health campaign. "What's less certain is how safe these chemicals are and what risk they may pose to ourselves, our children and our environment." [BBC](#), UK. 15 May 2005.

[Risk-Based Consumption Advice for Farmed Atlantic and Wild Pacific Salmon Contaminated with Dioxins](#) Dutch children exposed perinatally to dioxin showed decreased allergies but altered lymphocytes and thrombocytes and had lower antibody levels to mumps/measles at preschool age and recurrent middle-ear infections. Jeffery Foran, et al. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#) May 2005.

[Sealants in Playgrounds May Block Arsenic](#) Sealants can help reduce the cancer risk from arsenic-treated wood found in playground equipment and backyard decks. Hand-to-mouth

behavior is the primary source of exposure. This is why parents of children who routinely play on playgrounds made of CCA pressure-treated wood should be concerned. John Heilprin. Associated Press. 13 May 2005.

[Government Groups Issue Guidelines on Wood Safety](#) Parents will send children across the country outside this summer to play on decks and playsets treated with arsenic, chrome and copper. It's the chemical cocktail that stops the wood from rotting, but has also created mini-toxic waste dumps in backyards across America. Karen Hensel. Wish TV, Indianapolis. 18 May 2005.

[Peril at Planet Playground?](#) Planet Playground was built using arsenic-treated lumber, and township officials are evaluating whether they must demolish it. "The concern about exposure to CCA-treated wood is minimal when the wood is stained or sealed, according to the research," he said. "The recommendation is that you wash your hands." Erik Larsen. Asbury Park Press, New Jersey. 12 May 2005.

[Researchers warn high levels of arsenic in mulch could pose hazard](#) Arsenic-contaminated mulch is being spread across South Florida's flower beds, gardens, parks and playgrounds at levels 10 to 71 times the safety guideline. The high amounts point to pressure-treated wood as the source. South Florida Sun Sentinel, Florida. 24 May 2005.

[Schools shed thatched roof](#) While the vanishing of thatched roofs from schools has been widely welcomed, concerns are being raised about the health hazards posed by the alternative asbestos roofs. The kids are wilting under the excessive heat that penetrated through the asbestos sheets during summer. It also poses health hazard to students. [Registration required]. New India Press, India. 10 May 2005.

[Cancer seen in family members of asbestos workers](#) People who were exposed to asbestos through a family member who worked with the material appear to run the risk of developing the asbestos-related cancer mesothelioma many years later, a new study suggests. Wives and daughters were most often affected. Reuters Health. 31 May 2005.

[Sierra kids inhaling high asbestos levels](#) Elevated exposure detected in first tests for fibers during everyday sports, exercise activities. Children biking a dirt trail and playing baseball or soccer in an El Dorado County town are breathing almost as many asbestos fibers as federal rules allow for asbestos workers wearing respirators, according to EPA. Ian Hoffman. Oakland Tribune, California. 3 May 2005.

[Man Dies from Asbestos Dust on Stepfather's Overalls](#) A man who developed cancer after inhaling asbestos dust from his stepfather's work overalls as a toddler has died. Mr Welch has been pursuing a compensation claim on the grounds that exposure to the asbestos dust as a child made him susceptible to the disease in later life. James Tapsfield. Edinburgh Scotsman, Scotland. 9 May 2005.

[Man who 'inhaled asbestos' as child dies](#) Karen Mcveigh. Edinburgh Scotsman, Scotland. 10 May 2005.

[Child health fears](#) A group of South Warrimoo parents hold health fears for their children after discovering a vacant block they have played on for years is contaminated with arsenic and asbestos. Damien Madigan. [Blue Mountains Gazette](#), Australia. 25 May 2005.

[The Fluoride Debacle](#) Is fluoride side effect free? Absolutely not! The most obvious and noticeable deleterious effect of fluoride is that of fluorosis. Over 40% of children in fluoridated areas are showing signs of fluorosis, and the old mantra of this side effect being “only cosmetic” is being rapidly abandoned. Robert C. Dickson, MD, CCFP, FCFP & Dr. Jim Beck. [Epoch Times](#). 16 May 2005.

[Toxic dust near school feared](#) A Bronx congressman yesterday took up the cause of parents and local residents concerned that toxic dust may be blowing into a new high school building. Bill Egbert. [New York Daily News](#), New York. 24 May 2005.

## **(b) Lead**

[Study shows decreasing level of lead in children's blood](#) Phasing out leaded gasoline in Jakarta since 2001 has apparently satisfying results. A study by the University of Indonesia shows that the lead content in blood of elementary school students has dropped to 4.2 microns per centiliter from 8.6 microns in 2001, when the leaded gasoline phase-out program began. [Jakarta Post](#), Indonesia. 2 May 2005.

[USAID provides grant for lead level tests](#) USAID has given a US\$25,000 grant to a program that will test lead levels in schoolchildren and street vendors in Bandung. USAID's said such tests were important to determine the influence of leaded gasoline on human health in order to push the government to speed up the switch to unleaded gasoline. [Jakarta Post](#), Indonesia. 10 May 2005.

[Govt restarts nationwide unleaded gasoline campaign](#) The government has restarted a nationwide campaign promoting the use of unleaded gasoline. In Bandung around 30% of those under 18 have lead content in their blood higher than the safe limit. That's very alarming as (high levels) can cause IQ point reductions, symptoms of autism and respiratory problems. Hera Diani. [Jakarta Post](#). 30 May 2005.

[Alarming spurt in lead poisoning](#) Lead poisoning, almost unreported in the city even five years ago, is now threatening to turn into an epidemic. And the factors responsible for its rapid spread are changing lifestyle, poor personal hygiene and foul air. Around 51 per cent of children below 12 years in Calcutta carry more than permissible lead in their blood. Jayanta Basu. [Calcutta Telegraph](#), India. 6 May 2005.

[Roma Forced to Face Lead Poisoning](#) Jenita Mehmeti, aged four, died last summer in the refugee camp of Zitkovci in Kosovo. She was the second child among 60 born there since 1999 to die of suspected lead poisoning. Rokho Kim, a WHO expert who visited the camps in February this year said he had never encountered “such high lead levels in children's blood.” Vesna Peric Zimonjic. [IPS](#). 19 May 2005.

[U.S. - Run Smelter Poisons Peru Town-Residents](#) Yellow plumes of sulfur and dust sting Gina Jara's eyes as she plays in the streets around La Oroya's US-owned metals smelter, blamed for poisoning residents with its toxic gases. A Doe Run/Peru's Health Ministry study by showed 99.9% of children up to age 6 in La Oroya have abnormally high blood lead levels. Robin Emmott. Reuters. 25 May 2005.

[Crack down coming on lead smelting operators](#) The Ministry of Health is cracking down on lead-smelting operations. The fumes alone from some of these operations are toxic, and you find children playing in the yard or nearby to where these practices are being done. "Children especially are prone to lead poisoning. Kingston Jamaica Observer. 19 May 2005.

[Campaign Seeks to Highlight the Dangers of Lead Paint to Children](#) Children can be exposed to lead poisoning in any number of ways -- through water, for example. But experts agree the most common cause of lead poisoning in children is deteriorating lead-based paint. It's an issue that is being addressed worldwide. Ernest Leong. Voice of America. 25 May 2005.

[Lead tops list of developmental toxicants released by industry into environment](#) CEC warned that, although lead pollution has been in decline since the phase-out of leaded gasoline, it remains the leading developmental toxicant released by industrial facilities. Lead is linked to cancer, birth defects and other reproductive harm. Press Release. Commission for Environmental Cooperation. 24 May 2005.

[Ontario top lead polluter](#) Maria McClintock. Canadian Press. 24 May 2005.

[Airborne lead emission 13 times higher in Canada than U.S. in 2002](#) Tara Brautigam. Canadian Press. 25 May 2005.

[Pollution rising in Canada, declining in U.S., watchdog finds](#) Jeff Sallot. Toronto Globe and Mail, Ontario. 25 May 2005.

[Canada not helping to clear the air](#) Allison Dunfield. Toronto Globe and Mail, Ontario. 25 May 2005.

[Lead Still North American Pollution Danger](#) Robert Melnbardis. Reuters. 25 May 2005.

[Too few kids rechecked for lead exposure](#) Children who show high levels of lead in their blood during routine screenings often don't get the necessary follow-up tests to make sure those lead levels are coming down. Only 54% of children with elevated lead levels received follow-up testing within 6 months, putting them at risk for cognitive impairment. Serena Gordon. Health Day News. 11 May 2005.

[Follow-up Testing Among Children With Elevated Screening Blood Lead Levels](#) A reanalysis of data from research on lead's impact on children's intelligence finds that the US economy benefited by approximately \$319 billion as a result of reductions in lead body burdens between 1976 and 1999. Alex R. Kemper. JAMA. 11 May 2005.

[EPA Puts Mandated Lead-Paint Rules on Hold](#) Provoking angry responses, the EPA has quietly delayed work on completing required rules to protect children and construction workers from exposure to lead-based paint, exploring instead the possibility of using voluntary standards to

govern building renovations and remodeling. Tom Hamburger. Los Angeles Times, California. 10 May 2005.

[EPA Drops Regulatory Effort on Lead Paint](#) John Heilprin. Associated Press. 10 May 2005.

[Get the lead out, part II](#) The use of lead-based paint in housing has been banned in the US since 1978, but lead poisoning remains a problem, especially among poor children. Why, then, is the U.S. EPA nine years behind schedule on mandatory rules to protect not only children but also construction workers from exposure to the toxic substance? Editorial. Toledo Blade, Ohio. 13 May 2005.

[Efforts to end lead poisoning inexcusably weak](#) EPA keeps dodging its duty to set proper standards for cleanup of lead paint during older home renovations. It's just a symptom of the lack of will to stop the lead poisoning of successive waves of infants and toddlers. The problem has been obvious since the 1970s when lead was banned from gasoline and paint. Editorial. Detroit Free Press. 12 May 2005.

[Getting the lead out is not enough](#) Children from low-income families are more likely to be exposed to sources of lead, such as lead paint in their homes and at school. Poor nutrition also can exacerbate the effects of lead exposure. As a result, children at increased risk should be tested comprehensively and periodically. [Registration Required]. Bonny Forrest & Allan Mirsky. Washington Post. 22 May 2005.

[Lead-poisoning letdown](#) An audit performed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development investigating the process to distribute \$168 million in lead-poisoning mitigation grants confirms that the process was flawed. Tom Neltner, director of the Indianapolis-based Improving Kids' Environment, helped to spur the investigation. Editorial. Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, Indiana. 23 May 2005.

[Is the White House helping researchers reach the 'right' conclusions?](#) Childhood lead-poisoning expert Bruce Lanphear is convinced that politics have poisoned a wide array of federal scientific panels and policies since President George W. Bush took office. Lanphear heads Cincinnati's Children's Environmental Health Center. Sabrina Eaton. Plain Dealer, Cleveland. 29 May 2005.

[Drought conditions increase lead contamination risk in Broken Hill](#) With almost half the country in the grip of drought, one outback community is battling a new health risk as a result of the big dry. Broken Hill is home to one of the world's largest lead mines. One of the problems with that is avoiding exposure to lead can be difficult. Children are most at risk. Sarah Clarke. ABC News, Australia. 18 May 2005.

[Boy's family copes with lead poisoning](#) He just wants to hear his 12-year-old son say "hello." Lead poisoning has robbed Zachary of the ability to speak and left him with the IQ of a toddler. The boy is affectionate and gregarious, but he is hyperactive and prone to tantrums. "Get your kids tested," especially if you live in older housing, urged Barbour. Robert Goodrich. St. Louis Post-Dispatch. 2 May 2005.

[Lead-tainted neighborhood hoping help finally on way](#) This neighborhood is at the center of an effort to identify and clean up yards contaminated with lead from the old smelter a decade after state and local environmental officials discovered some yards were contaminated. "My grandbabies like to play outside. I don't want them to end up with defects". Tammy Webber. Indianapolis Star, Indiana. 6 May 2005.

[Legacy of lead lingers too long.](#) The cleanup of a lead-contaminated Northeastside neighborhood has taken way too long. In the highly transient neighborhood, children move in and out so quickly that blood testing doesn't necessarily reflect the levels of lead exposure. School closings may have prevented high incidences of learning disabilities from surfacing. Editorial. Indianapolis Star, Indiana. 6 May 2005.

[Lead poisoning rates level off](#) Childhood lead poisoning in Rhode Island held steady last year, with 1,167 new cases across the state, or 3.7 percent of screened youngsters, roughly the same as in 2003, a new state Department of Health report shows. [Subscription required]. Marion Davis. Providence Business News, Rhode Island. 12 May 2005.

[Agency to apply for lead-prevention grant](#) One hundred low-income homes with lead hazards could be rehabilitated if the county gets a \$3 million federal grant. In 2003-04, 143 children tested with elevated levels of lead in their bloodstream, said a supervising public-health nurse for the county's lead-poisoning prevention program. Annette Wells. San Bernardino County Sun, California. 25 May 2005.

[House found laden with lead](#) A single stark image has imprinted itself on the public health system about the dangers of lead: a chip of peeling paint on a child's bedroom wall and a small hand reaching up to touch it. Roger Sideman. Watsonville Register-Pajaronian, California. 4 May 2005.

[Water treatment process called potential risk](#) A combination of chemicals used in hundreds of water-treatment systems could cause lead to leach into water, researchers say. In Pitt a lead advisory was issued after a child had lead poisoning. Even small amounts of lead can cause neurological damage in children. [Registration required]. Jerry Allegood. Raleigh News & Observer, North Carolina. 18 May 2005.

[Pitt lead poisoning prompts warning](#) The discovery of lead poisoning in one child and elevated lead levels in another has prompted Pitt County health officials to issue a lead advisory for Greenville Utilities customers. An official said it could be North Carolina's first case of lead poisoning from drinking water. T. Scott Batchelor. Greenville Daily Reflector, North Carolina. 4 May 2005.

[Uncertainty about tap water remains](#) T. Scott Batchelor. Greenville Daily Reflector, North Carolina. 10 May 2005.

[Officials believe chloramines could have led to lead levels](#) T. Scott Batchelor. Greenville Daily Reflector, North Carolina. 10 May 2005.

[Pitt probes boy's lead poisoning](#) [Registration required]. Jerry Allegood. Raleigh News & Observer, North Carolina. 6 May 2005.

[Area family copes with lead poisoning](#) T. Scott Batchelor. Greenville Daily Reflector, North Carolina. 4 May 2005.

[Greenville Utilities trying to solve problem with lead](#) T. Scott Batchelor. Greenville Daily Reflector, North Carolina. 4 May 2005.

[In our view: What about the people?](#) A study found lead in wild birds. Because of earlier studies, we know without doubt that lead contamination can cause mental or emotional problems for youngsters under the age of 6. "I have never seen anything this detailed on the children who live here." Joplin Globe, Missouri. 1 May 2005.

[Lead in school leads to students being tested](#) Lead paint on 10 exterior doors at Graham A. Barden Elementary School in Havelock has prompted the health department to offer free testing of some students. New Bern Sun Journal, North Carolina. 5 May 2005.

[Lead paint could be used in your child's dishes](#) Lead paint is poisonous, but a Target 7 Investigation in New Mexico uncovered that the substance is used in common everyday dishes and glasses, with little or no warning. "The really sad thing about lead poisoning is that children who have been lead poisoned very young in their lives never fully recover." KOAT-TV, New Mexico. 10 May 2005.

[Lead found in household items](#). According to experts, lead poisoning is the number one health threat to Missouri and Illinois children. Even at low levels, lead can cause learning disabilities, IQ loss and behavior problems. The Newschannel Five test results showing lead in everyday dishes and glasses bought in stores were surprising. Leisa Zigman. St. Louis KSDK TV, Illinois. 10 May 2005.

[Lead levels drop dramatically in children of Woonsocket, Rhode Island](#) The incidence of elevated blood lead levels in the city's children has dropped dramatically since 1995, along with those in much of the state, a new health department report says. Russ Olivo. Woonsocket Call, Rhode Island. 10 May 2005.

[Dollar General Recalls 80,000 Pendants](#) Dollar General Corp. is recalling about 80,000 heart-shaped pendants. The Tennessee-base company says the pendants contain high levels of lead, posing a serious risk of lead poisoning to children. Los Angeles NBC4-TV, California. 13 May 2005.

### **(c) Pesticides**

[A long-ago war's grimmest legacy lives on](#) Nguyen Thi Lan's fourth child is unable to see, hear or speak. He is the most severely disabled of the three children she believes are victims of Agent Orange, the poison that rained out of Vietnamese skies more than four decades ago. Jill Schensul. Bergen County Record, New Jersey. 2 May 2005.

[House Votes to Ban Human Studies of Pesticides](#) The House voted to bar the Environmental Protection Agency from conducting or accepting any studies that test pesticides on humans, attempting to quell a growing controversy over whether federal scientists were encouraging families to expose their young children to harmful toxins. [Registration required]. Juliet Eilperin. Washington Post. 21 May 2005.

[Birth defects puzzle officials](#) Farmworkers might be the proverbial canary in the coal mine due to their regular and often intense exposure to chemicals that permeate the fabric of modern life, especially in Florida. Three deformed babies born during a seven-week period to farmworkers in Immokalee. Jan Hollingsworth. Tampa Tribune, Florida. 16 May 2005.

[Abundance of poisons, shortage of monitoring](#) The biggest difference between California and Florida tomatoes isn't taste or price but the amount of pesticides used to grow them. Last month, The Palm Beach Post broke the tragic news of severe birth-defect cases involving three children born within the past six months to migrant workers in Immokalee. Editorial. Palm Beach Post, Florida. 1 May 2005

[Spinning recovery from organic cotton](#) At least one thousand farmers in Punjab and Gujarat have opted to grow only organic cotton, giving pesticides, fertilisers and GM seeds the big heave-ho from their lands. "In Ludhiana, reports and studies have shown deaths and deformities in babies and children due to pesticide overuse". Pragma Singh. Bombay Indian Express, India. 24 May 2005.

[Feel-good factor](#) The big selling point of organic food is that it is free of chemicals, both in the growing of the food and in the killing of pests that might damage the crop. Chemicals suspected of causing a variety of problems, from cancer to bad behaviour and sexual abnormalities, occur in most children's blood in tiny quantities. John Vidal & Paul Brown. London Guardian. 20 May 2005.

[Food for thought: is organic better?](#) As the perceived threats from agricultural herbicides, pesticides, growth hormones and processed animal feed penetrate ever deeper into the American psyche, more people are buying organic. Infants and children are believed to be significantly more susceptible to health problems from agricultural chemicals. Gregory Foley. Idaho Mountain Express. 13 May 2005.

[Earth mothers turn to garden food](#) Young mothers are leading the way in environmentally friendly gardening amid worries about global warming and chemicals in food, the Royal Horticultural Society said yesterday. He said that young mothers are the keenest to keep chemicals out of their gardens and the food chain. Lewis Smith. London Times, England. 25 May 2005.

[Are mosquito repellents like DEET safe?](#) Yes, but some people still fear DEET because of 14 potentially DEET-related seizures over 40 years. But both CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics say DEET can be used safely for adults and children over 2 months old. They base their recommendations on safety studies by the EPA. Judy Foreman. Boston Globe, Massachusetts. 17 May 2005.

[Weedkiller opponents say your lawn can be healthy without pesticides](#) Some argue whether weedkillers are poisonous to kids who roll in the grass or dogs that sniff across the lawn, but Ketch Ryan considers the question silly. In her view, there's no reason to take the risk. Bruce Taylor Seeman. Cleveland Plain Dealer, Ohio. 12 May 2005.

[Fewer weeds, less herbicide](#) Students and concerned citizens are spending their afternoons pulling dandelions in an effort by the CU Environmental Center to beautify the school, decimate dandelions and possibly reduce the University's need to use herbicide. [Registration required]. Boulder Colorado Daily, Colorado. 10 May 2005.

#### **(d) Persistent Organic Pollutants**

[Four New Chemicals for Phase-out through Stockholm Convention](#) The conference ensured that efforts to reduce and eliminate a list of highly hazardous chemicals will move forward energetically. POPs can damage the nervous and immune systems, cause cancer and reproductive disorders and interfere with normal infant and child development. News Release. UNEP. 6 May 2005.

[Four New Chemicals Proposed for Global Blacklist](#) 4 new chemicals have been proposed for a global ban at the first meeting of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on POPs. POPs can travel great distances on wind and water currents and via trade of goods containing POPs, they accumulate in the body fat of people and animals and are passed on from mothers to unborn children. ENS. 5 May 2005.

[Targeted For Phaseout: Four more chemicals proposed for control under persistent organic pollutant treaty](#) Cheryl Hogue. Chemical and Engineering News. 9 May 2005.

[UN may add new chemicals to 'dirty dozen' ban](#) Patricia Avila. Reuters. 11 May 2005.

[Toxic Lice Treatment Under Scrutiny](#) Experts will study the effects on health of 4 toxic chemicals, including the widely used lice treatment lindane, to consider their potential inclusion under the Convention on POPs. Activists reported that lindane can damage the nervous and immune systems, and that scientific research has linked its use to brain tumours in children. Raúl Pierri. Inter Press Service. 6 May 2005.

[Governments Meet to Eliminate 12 Persistent Organic Pollutants](#) The Stockholm Convention on POPs, which entered into force on May 17, 2004, targets 12 hazardous pesticides and industrial chemicals that can kill people, damage the nervous and immune systems, cause cancer and reproductive disorders, and interfere with normal infant and child development. ENS. 2 May 2005.

[UN meet to seek safer ways to kill insect pests](#) Alister Doyle. Reuters. 2 May 2005.

[Multilateralism Alive & Kicking](#) The Stockholm Convention POPs is expected to add new long lived substances to the list of those proven to harm human health and wildlife. If we can act on chemicals together, if we can in partnership reduce child mortality; improve maternal health;

combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases and ensure environmental stability. Klaus Toepfer  
UNEP. 5 May 2005.

[U.S. Looking Next Year to Join Global Treaty Banning World's Most Toxic Chemicals](#) The US is looking to join an international treaty phasing out a dozen of the world's most hazardous pesticides and chemicals next year. POPs tend to persist in the environment and travel long distances, posing significant health risks, including birth defects. Kevin Gray. Associated Press. 6 May 2005.

[Malaria call linked to drive on organic pollutants](#) UNEP will call for more funding for a malaria vaccine as part of efforts to help phase out some of the world's most dangerous chemicals. POPs can damage people's nervous and immune systems, as well as causing cancer and reproductive disorders. [Subscription required]. Fiona Harvey/Frances Williams. Financial Times, London. 4 May 2005.

[Environment/Health:Despite Int'l Agreement, DDT Will Not Disappear Overnight](#) Signatories of the Stockholm Convention pledged to search for alternatives in order to eventually eliminate the use of the DDT in the fight against malaria. POPs have been shown to increase the risk of cancer, neurological disorders, infertility, and a weakened immune system. Raúl Pierri. Inter Press Service. 5 May 2005.

[Much-Maligned DDT Still Has Supporters](#) DDT remains an effective weapon against malaria, according to the UN. Indications are that the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Stockholm Convention on POPs will approve its continued but limited use. More than a third of the Latin America's population lives in at-risk zones, and each year 1.4 million people, mostly children, are infected. Diego Cevallos. IPS. 3 May 2005.

[Best way to attack malaria is with DDT](#) Malaria kills millions of people, mostly pregnant women and children, in sub-Saharan Africa each year. DDT is not the only way to eradicate malaria. It should be rotated out with other chemicals, netting and limiting mosquito breeding grounds, if a vaccine could be cheaply and safely produced, that would be great. Betsy Hart. Seattle Post Intelligencer. 1 May 2005.

[Mozambique minister: DDT may be needed to fight malaria](#) Mozambique's Foreign Minister Alcinda Abreu called on the industrialised world to provide alternative methods to fight Malaria or drop opposition to using DDT against mosquitoes which spread the disease. Malaria accounts for 35% of deaths among children under 5 in Mozambique. Leon Mangasarian. Deutsche Presse Agentur. 13 May 2005.

## **(e) Mercury**

[World urgently needs an EU mercury export ban - EEB](#) Environmental/health groups have called upon the EU to maintain an earlier commitment to ban EU mercury exports by 2011. Mercury exported to non-OECD countries is largely consumed in poorly controlled and outmoded or illegal activities, resulting in substantial exposure to workers and their families. Press Release. EU Business. 13 May 2005.

[Newmont's Indonesian dilemma](#) Newmont deserves to be treated fairly, a quality that seems disturbingly absent in Indonesia's handling of a mine waste dispute. Mercury can combine with other elements and enter the food chain, so people who eat a lot of fish can build up dangerous levels in their blood, leading to brain and internal organ damage, especially in children. Editorial. Denver Post. 20 May 2005.

[The Age of Autism: Mercury in the air](#) A new study has found a possible link between higher mercury emissions and higher rates of autism. "On average, for each 1,000 pounds of environmentally released mercury, there was a 43 percent increase in the rate of special education services and a 61 percent increase in the rate of autism." Dan Olmsted. United Press International. 5 May 2005.

[The Age of Autism: Mercury ascending](#) A year ago, the prestigious Institute of Medicine slammed the door on the idea that mercury in vaccines bore any relation to autism. But that door seems slightly ajar. A book called "Evidence of Harm," is a compelling portrayal of parents and scientists who have pushed the vaccines-autism theory. Dan Olmsted. United Press International. 17 May 2005.

[The Age of Autism: Heavy metal](#) Parents of autistic children Tuesday launched an organization called Generation Rescue based on their conviction that flushing mercury out of children's bodies improves and in some instances reverses autism. Dan Olmsted. United Press International. 24 May 2005.

[A child's return from autism](#) Leslie Fulbright. San Francisco Chronicle, California. 25 May 2005.

[Author: Mercury causes autism](#) But Kirby's own recent investigation has caused him to question the federal government's position that there is "no evidence of harm" in the effect of mercury-tainted vaccines on young children. Kathleen O'Dell. Springfield News-Leader, Missouri. 23 May 2005.

[Controversy over mercury and vaccinations](#) Mercury's effect on young children can be more serious as their brains and nervous systems still forming. With high exposure, children could be slow in reaching developmental milestones, or they could have mental retardation, vision problems, involuntary muscle contractions, seizures and lack of speech. Liz Hayes. Pittsburgh Valley News Dispatch. 2 May 2005

[Legislature's limit on mercury in infant vaccines is a good bill.](#) Researchers don't agree on the risks that accompany using mercury in vaccines for infants. Ultimately, though, their debates are academic. Some studies have shown a connection between mercury and neurological problems such as autism. Springfield News Leader, Missouri. Editorial, 13 May 2005.

[Mercury in food, vaccines](#) The ongoing mercury poisoning by power plants, increasing mercury toxicity of fish and persistence of the drug industry and government agencies to continue the use of mercury as a preservative in vaccines are alarming. State officials should take note of the

devastating damage mercury does to our children. Lawrence P. Kaplan. Salt Lake Tribune, Utah. 15 May 2005.

[U.S. States Sue EPA over Mercury Trading Rules](#) 11 states sued the Bush administration to block new rules allowing coal-burning utilities to trade rights to emit toxic mercury. The core issue is whether EPA went far enough with its March regulations to protect public health. Mercury contaminates fish and water and has been linked to neurological disorders in young children. Reuters. ENN. 19 May 2005.

[States, Green Groups File Suit to Block Bush Mercury Rule](#) J.R. Pegg. Environment News Service. 18 May 2005.

[11 states challenge break on mercury for coal power plants](#) [Registration required]. Michelle O'Donnell. New York Times. 19 May 2005.

[N.J. again takes lead in multi-state suit against EPA](#) Associated Press. WNBC.com, New York. 19 May 2005.

[Connecticut joins multi-state mercury suit against EPA](#) Angela Delli Santi. AP. New York Newsday. 19 May 2005.

[Pa. to set tougher rules to cut mercury emissions](#) [Registration required]. Tom Avril. Philadelphia Inquirer. 19 May 2005.

[Sentiment grows against U.S. mercury plan](#) A coalition of environmental groups announced plans to join states in suing the Bush administration over a proposed rule to reduce mercury emissions from power plants. When swallowed mercury can lead to health problems and learning disabilities, especially in young children and fetuses. Scott Harper. Hampton Roads Virginian-Pilot, Virginia. 18 May 2005.

[Environmentalists say mercury emissions rule is weak](#) Pamela Wood. Annapolis Capital, Maryland. 19 May 2005.

[Environmentalists to ask court to block mercury regulation](#) Jeff Nesmith. Cox News Service. 18 May 2005.

[New mercury rules decried](#) Kim McGuire. Denver Post, Colorado. 18 May 2005.

[Anti-emissions mission](#) EPA is correct in saying that its rule is the first federal regulation mandating reduced mercury emissions. EPA is wrong in contending that its rule is the best way to go about reductions. Mercury health hazards include nervous system and brain damage, and toxic buildups in women that can be passed to fetuses. Editorial. White Plains Journal News, New York. 24 May 2005.

[Fallout from 'nuclear option'](#) The Bush administration's new plan on mercury pollution illustrates the importance of maintaining a strong and independent judiciary. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin harmful to fetuses' and infants' nervous systems. One in six American women carries enough accumulated mercury to potentially harm her children. [Registration required]. John F. Kerry. Boston Globe. 24 May 2005.

[Mass mercury poisoning in north west Russia, 32 children hospitalized](#) Thirty-nine local people, including children, have been hospitalized after being diagnosed with mercury poisoning in the

northwestern Russian city of Archangelsk, Itar-Tass news agency reported. Doctors say their condition is satisfactory at the moment. Moscow News, Russia. 19 May 2005.

[The mercury's rising: No more dirty power plants for Utah](#) EPA estimates that 1 in 6 women of childbearing age has mercury levels in her blood high enough to put her baby at risk. This equates into approximately 630,000 infants born each year with unsafe mercury levels, each of them facing neurological damage severe enough to impair learning. Tim Wagner. Salt Lake Tribune, Utah. 15 May 2005.

[Utahns can test their hair for mercury](#). About 48 tons of mercury is emitted into the nation's air each year from coal-fired power plants, with tons more coming from mining and industrial development. I think it would be wise for all mothers or expectant mothers or women of childbearing age to consider being tested. Salt Lake Tribune, Utah. 6 May 2005.

[Utah should start looking for tainted fish](#) Utah has come up with a surefire way to see that it does not have to report that its fish are riddled with unsafe levels of mercury. Mercury is known to cause learning disabilities in children and is increasingly linked to maladies from autism to Alzheimer's. There are ways of generating power, and mining gold. Editorial. Salt Lake Tribune, Utah. 5 May 2005.

[Mercury too high in Utah test fish](#) Patty Henetz. Salt Lake Tribune, Utah. 11 May 2005.

[Good fish, bad fish](#) An expert on food toxicology has developed guidelines for eating good fish and avoiding potentially harmful fish. The limits apply only to pregnant and nursing women, women who expect to become pregnant and children younger than 15. Linda Stahl. Louisville Courier-Journal, Kentucky. 13 May 2005.

[Fish tested for mercury](#) An advisory has been issued on consumption of fish in Lake Pend Oreille. In sufficient amounts, mercury has been shown to cause central nervous system problems, especially in young children whose developing bodies easily absorb mercury. Tom Greene. Bonner County Daily Bee, Idaho. 6 May 2005.

[At least 19 more waterways may need mercury advisories](#) A Baton Rouge newspaper reports that the state may need to add about 19 more Louisiana waterways to its list of those where pregnant women and children under 7 should limit their fish consumption. Associated Press. 23 May 2005.

[Mercury Warnings In Effect for Fish in all Wisconsin Lakes](#) His grandmother says along with teaching him how to fish, she's teaching him about the dangers of eating fish. The DNR has statewide safe-eating guidelines for women of child bearing years and children under 15. Zac Schultz. Madison WMTV, Wisconsin. 9 May 2005.

[State considers ban on use of mercury in dental fillings](#) Little Or No Health Risk Seen But Ban May Help Remove Element From Environment. The state is considering whether existing state law applies to dental fillings. Children, pregnant women and their developing fetuses are especially susceptible to the effects of mercury. [Purchase required]. Judy Benson. New London Day, Connecticut. 9 May 2005.

### (3) WATER AND SANITATION

[Water: Women and children](#) Children and women are main victims of inadequate water supply and sanitation. Children are primarily vulnerable to preventable diseases, which results from lack of sanitation. They ensure water availability at home for domestic household needs, and manage environmental hygiene and sanitary services at the household. Md. Sazedul Islam. [Independent](#), Bangladesh. 13 May 2005.

[Water for the World](#) Congress is considering ways the US can get more clean water to the developing world. Some lawmakers want the private sector to help. But private water companies are stirring unrest in some developing countries. The UN says more than 9,000 children die each day due to waterborne disease. Steve Curwood. [Living On Earth](#). 18 May 2005.

[Potable water situation in Sindh alarming: Talpur](#) The potable water situation in Sindh as alarming. Talpur said access to drinking water is a basic human right and it should be protected without discrimination. He quoted a study which states that 52% of the women and 6% of children in Pakistan suffer from consuming contaminated water. Rasheed Khalid. [Jang Newspapers](#), Pakistan. 17 May 2005.

[President for provision of safe potable water](#) President Musharraf stressed the need for accelerating improved services, especially clean and safe drinking water. Prime Minister Aziz said 40% of diseases were water-borne and the provision of safe potable water would help prevent disease and reduce child mortality. [Jang Newspapers](#), Pakistan. 20 May 2005.

[Most diseases in NWFP caused by polluted water](#) 60% of diseases are due to persistent use of contaminated water, according to a UNICEF official. UNICEF is building latrines in schools for children because bad water infected children the most. Contaminated water in some villages has been causing teeth problems among children due to the presence of fluoride in water. [Dawn](#), Pakistan. 23 May 2005.

[Pollutants in Gomati destabilising river](#) When life-giving water becomes cause of death, the situation is alarming to say the least. Two kinds of wastes are discharged into the river - organic and inorganic. Certain metals are very harmful to humans. Children 0-6 and 6-10 are at a maximum risk. Pregnant women are also at a high risk. [Bombay Times of India](#). 16 May 2005.

[Potable water as thirst choice](#) Sustainable solutions to drinking water contamination, such as rainwater harvesting, are urgently needed. Hundreds of villages in central Assam are affected today by fluoride contamination of water sources. Prevention is key - finding major sources of contamination and learning to control them. Anjana Mahanta. [Calcutta Telegraph](#). 25 May 2005.

[Indian slums learn from London's sewers](#) Attempts to bring clean water and sanitation to slums have had mixed success. Pumps can break down without maintenance. "If you don't have to spend all your time and money caring for sick children, you have more to put into other goods like education." [Purchase required]. Fiona Harvey. [Financial Times](#), London. 5 May 2005.

[Thailand warns of possible dengue fever epidemic](#) Denge fever infections could reach epidemic levels in Thailand in the coming months, officials warned, after a 13-year-old boy died. Thailand has seen a sharp surge in cases and the public must do more to help curb the mosquito-born illness by removing stagnant water where the insects reproduce. Associated Press. Star, Malaysia. 12 May 2005.

[Water cellars boost living conditions](#) Ma Baoping has tasted his first green vegetable thanks to a new supply of water in his village in Dongxiang County of Northwest China's Gansu Province. Drought conditions contribute to a low quality of life. Education facilities are poor to nonexistent and there is an increased likelihood of disease among women and children. Wang Ying. China Daily. 25 May 2005.

[Peasants suffer as long Hainan drought drags on](#) Dead fish lie on the dried bottom of Ding An reservoir as the drought continues to ravage Hainan, bringing extreme hardship to farmers and their families. Environmental refugees will have fled coastlines vulnerable to rising sea levels, storms or floods - or agricultural land that became too arid to cultivate. Peter Harmsen. Agence France-Presse. 25 May 2005.

[Once pristine waters now a health hazard](#) Sitting on the beach of Dakar's Hann Bay, where the waters lapping the shore are coloured red by effluent from a textile factory, a fisherman says that 20 years ago the seas off Senegal's capital were clean and full of fish. Today his son's eyes are red from conjunctivitis, his granddaughter, playing in sand thick with worms, is covered in a rash. UN IRIN. 24 May 2005.

[Public backlash over private water deals](#) Hadiya Atheuman, mother of 11 children, was yesterday drawing dirty water from a shallow, hand-dug well in the western outskirts of Dar es Salaam. The coastal city is one of the fastest growing in the world and its water system has utterly failed to provide for the roughly three million people who now live there. John Vidal. Guardian, London. 25 May 2005.

[Play pumps provide fun, water to Swazi schools](#) Hundreds of school children in draught-stricken regions of Swaziland are having fun and bringing much needed water into their villages through the use of so-called "play pumps," merry-go-rounds connected to boreholes that draw water for meals, washing and school gardens when kids spin them. Mbabane. AllAfrica Global Media/IRIN. 3 May 2005.

[Baghdad's Polluted Water Makes Children Sick With Cholera](#) Cholera is spreading in Baghdad's impoverished al-Amil quarter where overcrowding and contaminated water are leading to fears of an epidemic. Children have been worse affected, with a doctor saying he is now seeing young cholera patients on a daily basis. Nasir Kadhim/Salam Nasir. Environment News Service. 25 May 2005.

[Quality of life for many Iraqis still poor, U.N. says](#) In one of the most comprehensive surveys on living conditions in Iraq, the UN reported that many Iraqis have poor access to clean water, live in overcrowded conditions, struggle to stay in school and often live in homes without sewage

systems. 80% of families in rural areas use unsafe drinking water. Rick Jervis. USA Today. 13 May 2005.

Packard, U.N. official discuss water woes In a time when more than 4,000 children die every day from waterborne diseases, the United Nations is hoping to take aim at water problems worldwide. Reducing the number of people without access to safe water and basic sanitation is the target of a 10-year plan developed by the United Nations. Clarissa Aljentera. Monterey County Herald, California. 5 May 2005.

UNICEF to help combat cholera in Sao Tome UNICEF is sending medical aid to the West African country of Sao Tome and Principe to combat a cholera outbreak that has infected 131 people, killing three. "It is extremely urgent that we get clean water and safe toilet and sanitary facilities as quickly as possibly to all affected communities." Associated Press. 10 May 2005.

UNICEF and Procter & Gamble Join Forces UNICEF welcomed an alliance with Procter & Gamble that could provide safe drinking water for millions of families and schoolchildren. The focus of the alliance will be providing home-based water purification, to ease the burden on millions of families who currently struggle to access safe water. Newswire Services. American Chronicle. 25 May 2005.

UNICEF Water Chief to Speak at ACE05 AWWA announced that UNICEF will speak its Annual Conference and Exposition. The talk, "After the Tsunami: UNICEF's Efforts in Restoring Water and Sanitation in Indonesia," will focus on the steps taken to install safe drinking water points and construct sanitation and bathing facilities. Press Release. American Water Works Association. 18 May 2005.

UN nuclear energy agency helps countries safeguard shared water sources IAEA is working closely with other UN agencies, especially UNEP, to help countries assess and manage limited water resources, especially when shared between countries. A lack of drinking water or adequate sanitation kills 1.7 million people a year, 90 per cent of them children, IAEA said. UN News Center. 24 May 2005.

The Emerging Water Wars A bleak assessment of the world's water resources, and outlines the numerous conflicts and crises brewing over real and estimated water shortages worldwide. The human cost of water scarcity: a million dead children a year, a billion people without access to treated water, almost double this number without sanitation. Sam Vaknin. Global Politician. 20 May 2005.

Don't drink the sewage Why would the EPA propose a new policy that would allow sewage treatment plants to discharge inadequately treated human waste into lakes, rivers, streams, and coastal waters? These pathogens can infect all of us, but are of particular concern to children, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems. Jeffrey K. Griffiths. Boston Globe. 18 May 2005.

#### **(4) MISCELLANEOUS**

[Wrapping up world meeting, UN health body acts on cancer, immunization](#) The World Health Assembly adopted resolutions affecting global public health, including strategies on immunization and cancer prevention and control, and the adoption of the revised International Health Regulations that govern national and international response to disease outbreaks. News Release. [United Nations](#). 25 May 2005.

[Threat of Bird Flu Pandemic Dominates World Health Assembly](#) "Unless we succeed in bringing about the major changes we are working for in the very near future, the targets for reducing child mortality will not be achieved by 2015," Lee said. [Environment News Service](#). 17 May 2005.

[World Health Officials Agree to Report All Major Disease Outbreaks](#) [Environment News Service](#). 20 May 2005.

[Africa is the worst place on earth for mothers and children, Save the Children says](#) The State of the World's Mothers 2005, a report by Save The Children USA, studied 110 countries and details health and educational opportunities for mothers and their children. In Ethiopia just 25 percent of the population has access to clean water. [Purchase required]. [Associated Press](#). 3 May 2005.

[Two children die of malaria each minute, warns UN](#) 2 African children are dying preventably from malaria every minute due to a lack of donations to tackle the problem, according to the first ever study of the disease worldwide. At present malaria remains the infectious disease that takes more lives of children in Africa than any other - 3 times as many as HIV. Louisa McLennan. [Times](#), London. 3 May 2005.

[Loss of Forests Fuels Highland Malaria](#) Researchers in Tanzania have attributed the rise of malaria cases in the country's highland regions to increased clearing of forests for agriculture and commercial lumbering. In Tanzania malaria is the leading communicable disease, contributing up to 40% of outpatient and inpatient caseloads in children under 5 years. Zephania Ubwani. [East African](#). 26 May 2005.

[South Africa says climate change will see malaria soar](#) Climate change will quadruple the number of South Africans at risk from malaria by 2020, bringing the mosquito-borne disease south towards the country's commercial heartland, a minister said. Malaria kills more than a million people a year worldwide, mostly children. Peter Apps. [Reuters](#). 5 May 2005

[Global warming could worsen malaria in South Africa](#). Agence France-Presse. [TerraDaily](#). 6 May 2005.

[Global warming will increase world hunger-U.N.](#) According to a FAO report, "In some 40 poor, developing countries, with a combined population of 2 billion ... production losses due to climate change may drastically increase the number of undernourished people, severely hindering progress in combating poverty and food insecurity". Philip Pullella. [Reuters](#). 26 May 2005.

[A Better Way to Fight Poverty](#) In Kenya, malaria, which could be as treatable as strep throat, kills one in five children every year. This year, every schoolchild will eat. Sauri was chosen last year to be one of the UN's test villages to show how poverty in Africa can be ended through

programs that help villages directly. [Purchase required]. Editorial. New York Times. 5 May 2005.

Cold War secrecy's fallout Russians in the region surrounding a plutonium plant get thyroid cancer at nearly twice the nation's average rate, according to a recent study. Doctors confirmed that her daughter, Galina, suffered severe health problems from being exposed to radioactivity as a fetus. Alex Rodriguez. Chicago Tribune, Illinois. 20 May 2005.

Children's health study in need of money The National Children's Study, an ambitious long-range effort to sort out the role toxic chemicals, heredity, diet and other factors play in children's health, is starving for funds. Sponsored by CDC and other agencies, the study is designed to track 100,000 children from before birth to adulthood. Jeff Nesmith. Atlanta Journal-Constitution. 11 May 2005.

Bill forces school systems to cut environmental dangers School systems would be forced to pay more attention to health hazards under a bill. It's called the "School Children's Health Act. It would call on schools to look for ways to cut environmental dangers. Those include bus exhaust and pesticides, even wood treated with arsenic. Mitch Kokai. Charlotte News14 TV, North Carolina. 20 May 2005.

Survey: teens know risks but tan anyway Despite efforts to get the word out about the dangers of tanning, teens aren't getting the message. Worldwide, between 2 and 3 million skin cancer cases are diagnosed each year. Incidence is rising in part because of excessive, unprotected sun exposure and depletion of the ozone layer. Lindsey Tanner. Associated Press. 2 May 2005.

Danger is skin-deep School systems throughout the Globe West circulation area are teaching students about the damage sunlight can cause to skin and the dangers of contracting melanoma, a potentially deadly skin cancer. WHO issued a recommendation that no one younger than 18 should use a sunbed. Boston Globe, Massachusetts. 19 May 2005.

How to Save Your Skin in the Season of Sun The outdoor season is now in full swing in the Northern Hemisphere, and with it comes a growing concern about melanoma, the fastest rising cancer in the world. A number of research studies have linked melanoma later in life to bad sunburns experienced in childhood. [Registration Required]. Jane E. Brody. New York Times. 24 May 2005.

UN top-10 list of underreported stories: Environment and health: New insights into spread of infectious diseases The UN issued a list of what it deems the top-10 underreported big stories, including the fact that infectious diseases that have revived and thrived in places where natural habitats are altered or degraded by loggers, road and dam builders and urban encroachment. United Nations. 4 May 2005.

Satellites monitoring dust storms linked to health risk Medical researchers are using satellites to track massive dust storms blowing across Africa's Sahel belt. The aim is to learn more about lethal meningitis epidemics that often follow in the dust's wake. Meningitis mainly attacks children and young adults. News. European Space Agency. 10 May 2005.

[Partnership Initiated to Help Improve Human Health, Environmental Quality in Asian Cities](#) EPA and the Asian Development Bank will work together to improve human health and environmental quality in major urban areas of Asia. Projects could include efforts to reduce air pollution, improve drinking water quality, and help promote sound environmental management. News Release. [EPA](#). 13 May 2005.

[World Bank urges MENA officials to work on behalf of children and youth](#) The World Bank has called upon mayors of cities and local authorities in the Middle East and North Africa to work on behalf of children. Urban growth is forcing families to live in overcrowded areas, in sub-standard housing, and share crowded schools, health facilities, and clean water sources. [AME Info](#), Dubai. 17 May 2005.

[Turn your baby green](#) Parents who have struggled to raise their babies in a more environmentally sound way by using washable nappies must be in despair. Our guide below shows how an eco-conscious approach can be healthier for kids, parents, and the planet. Some may even save you money. [London Observer](#), England. 23 May 2005.

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