

HECANET January 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

A substantial amount of articles this month addressed air pollution in developing countries, including a report on thickening layers of nitrogen dioxide in the air in Indian cities, which is causing concern among paediatricians; and one on the health effects of the rising use of diesel in Uganda and the resultant levels of fine-particle pollution. The need to address particulate pollution was also discussed in the US press with the federal EPA proposing new rules. One opinion piece pointed to the considerable additional research, some 2,000 studies altogether, expanding the list of adverse health effects associated with fine particles, especially among children. Meanwhile a report in the US found that one-third of all Americans are threatened by soot pollution, while a report from Canada indicated that the rate of childhood asthma has soared fourfold over the past 20 years, to a level where more than one out of every 10 children is now diagnosed with the respiratory illness. Links were made to air quality.

A great deal of articles dealt with the dangers of secondhand smoke for children, with reports of more than 15 million children being exposed to secondhand smoke everyday, and more than 280 children dying each year as a result of respiratory illnesses caused by secondhand smoke inhalation. US officials concluded that secondhand smoke causes lung cancer and heart disease and children raised by smokers can be more than 3 times at risk of developing lung cancer as adults. California regulators declared secondhand tobacco smoke a toxic air pollutant, pointing to the fact that it causes 31,000 episodes of asthma in children, 1,600 instances of low birth weights and 4,700 cases of women delivering pre-term babies, and an increase in respiratory tract and middle ear infections for infants and young children. Meanwhile, a report by US plastic surgeons found smoking during pregnancy significantly elevates the risk of having a child with excess, webbed or missing fingers and toes. There were also a number of articles dealing with increasing national and state-level legislation restricting smoking in both Europe and the US.

As in previous months, the risks posed by certain chemicals attracted a large amount of media coverage. The media reported that the Danish government plans to challenge the European Commission over approval of a flame retardant (PBDEs) that may cause birth defects and cancer, while Washington State agencies urged a ban on flame retardants. A great deal of attention was devoted to phthalates and bisphenol A, with scientists debating the health risks of the two chemicals found in plastic baby products. California legislators considered a bill that would ban their use in those products. A new report indicated that as many as half of all breast cancers may be foisted upon woman by pollutants in the

environment, buttressing what many researchers suspect: that repeated low doses-particularly in early childhood - to chemicals can have a profound effect. Other chemicals addressed included: a toxic chemical used to make Teflon, manganese (which ingested in high doses in drinking water was found to hamper intellectual function in children), perchlorate, PCBs, radon and dioxins. The media also debated the safety of fish, with in one report researchers concluding that, for most people, the potential cancer risks of eating salmon containing toxic chemicals outweighs the benefits gained from consuming the fish – especially for young people at risk of lifetime accumulation of the carcinogenic pollutants and pregnant women concerned about birth defects and IQ loss in the fetus. Another report highlighted that eating the omega-3 in oily fish in pregnancy can boost children's future brain power and social skills.

Research conducted in Mexico concluded that exposure to even small amounts of lead through a mother's blood may harm the brain development of unborn babies. Researchers found that maternal blood lead levels well below 10 mcg/dL appeared to have a lasting impact on their children's IQ, at least up to the age of 10. The media heralded the end of an era of leaded gas in most of Africa, while high school students in Jakarta protested the dangers of lead pollution in the air there. In South Africa, the national health department will move to regulate the use of lead in manufacturing paint used on furniture and toys, while in Kosovo, a newly-refurbished camp will open for internally displaced Roma populations that are enduring unhealthy lead levels. Lead was also firmly in the media's eye in the US, with opinion pieces underscoring that children who are still being permanently damaged by excessive lead levels live mainly at the poverty level or near it, in neighborhoods where they can be poisoned by lead from contaminated paint, water, soil and dust. The main focus was on lead in paint and related moves to stem risks through legislation and awareness campaigns. US/EPA published proposed regulations that would affect contractors working on older homes that contain lead-based paints. US/EPA also released a specialized toolkit to encourage school officials and child care facilities to reduce lead in their drinking water.

With regard to pesticides, one article presented a case for revisiting the safety of pesticides. It argued that contemporary neuro-toxicological studies of pesticides testing impacts are not protective of future generations. A report noted that DDT could once again lead Africa's war against malaria, after a US Senate committee heard unanimous arguments in its favour. A set of articles covered a new study which indicated that children frequently exposed to household insecticides used on plants, lawns and in head lice shampoos appear to run double the risk of developing childhood leukaemia, while another set dealt with the new rules issued in the US governing the use of information collected in tests that expose humans to toxic pesticides, which drew criticism from environmentalists. It would prohibit the intentional dosing of pregnant women and children with such poisons. Other articles dealt with safety issues related to the agricultural use of pesticides and the relative benefits of organic food. Mercury was addressed mainly regarding various plans at the US state level to reduce mercury emissions from coal-burning power plants. Other mercury-related articles covered: whether there is a link between a mercury preservative in childhood immunizations and cases of autism; and mercury in fish – with newly released data providing evidence that some cans of light tuna, and ahi tuna contain high levels of mercury.

Many of the water and sanitation related articles spotlighted the situation in China, where an estimated 300 million drink unsafe water, tainted by chemicals and other contaminants. Other articles looked at the burden on women caused by water scarcity and one article from Ghana noted that the average distance undertaken by African and Asian women and children to gain access to water is approximately 6km. Other articles covered efforts to address water management in Nepal and Pakistan. Encouraging news was that two new vaccines against rotavirus, the leading known cause of deaths from diarrhea among infants around the world, have proved safe and effective in two of the largest clinical trials in the history of medicine.

An opinion piece in the Yemeni press focused on environmental threats to children's health, noting that

children today live in an environment vastly different from that of a few generations ago, and that exposure to environmental risk factors during childhood may not only impact a child's health, but ill-health outcomes may appear in and persist throughout adulthood. A major report from North America's CEC's on children's health and environment indicators found that children remain at risk from environmental exposures and that children's health reporting must be improved to address the data gaps identified in the report. There was also a major report on the 'hidden epidemic' of birth defects running through the world's infants and children, striking about 8 million every year. It was pointed out the report does not calculate the hundreds of thousands of infants with birth defects caused by exposure during pregnancy to environmental toxins, alcohol, tobacco smoke and disease. There were many articles dealing with the drought in Africa, especially in Kenya, with Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai blaming the drought on deforestation and urging immediate steps to replace lost trees. Deforestation was also pinpointed as one of the environmental degradation factors that have contributed to the high death toll in 2005 from 'natural' disasters. WHO noted that natural events in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean lands amplified due to deforestation and stripping of vegetation from coast-lines. There was reports of studies indicating that malaria risk is increased by tropical deforestation and also by mercury contamination from gold-mining which reduces immune system defenses. The media also reported that emergence of avian flu as a challenge to human health can be considered as a reflection of major changes taking place in the environment. 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) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking
- (2) CHEMICALS:** (a) General, (b) Lead, (c) Pesticides, (d) Mercury
- (3) WATER AND SANITATION**
- (4) MISCELLANEOUS** (a) General (b) Americas (c) Asia (d) Africa (e) Middle East (f) Europe/Russia

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

HECA-supported pilot projects:

This month's spotlight is on the HECA-supported project in Mongolia where the Ministry of Health is partnering with the Institute of Public Health, the WHO Country Office and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health Impact Assessment at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Australia in a research effort aimed at putting the results of research into indoor air quality and their relationship to respiratory symptoms into practice. The overall objective of the project is to implement

and evaluate cost-effective strategies designed to change factors related to indoor air quality which are likely to be associated with cases of bronchitis and other respiratory disorders in Mongolia. It is expected that outcomes from the project can be used by various agencies to bring about significant changes in peoples' knowledge, attitudes and practices around indoor air quality such as the design of houses in relation to ventilation and facilities for drying clothes. For materials received from the project to date see the [HECA website](#).

A summary of the HECA Secretariat/WHO Regional Office for Africa [inter-regional consultation](#) on "Improving Children's Environmental Health in Settings - Experiences and lessons for policies and action", held in Entebbe, Uganda from 29 November to 2 December 2005 is available on the HECA web-site and the report and presentations will follow shortly.

For more info:

Healthy Environments for Children Alliance: <http://www.who.int/heca/en/>

International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage: http://www.who.int/household_water/en/

The Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators: <http://www.who.int/ceh/indicators/en/>

(2) North American report on children's health and environment indicators

The North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), in partnership with public health organizations and the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States, released the first-ever report on [children's health and environment indicators in North America](#). The report presents 13 indicators under three thematic areas: asthma and respiratory disease, effects of exposure to lead and other toxic substances, and waterborne diseases. It finds that North American children remain at risk from environmental exposures and that children's health reporting must be improved to address the data gaps identified in the report. Only one of the indicators, addressing asthma in children, was fully reported by all three countries.

These data show a rising number of childhood asthma cases across North America. One possible contributor is outdoor air pollution such as ground-level ozone and particulate matter, which remains a problem for all three countries. In Mexico, exposure to smoke from indoor burning of wood or charcoal is also a problem, as 18 percent of the country's population continued to burn biomass for cooking and heating in 2000. And while Canadian and American children are increasingly less likely to be exposed to environmental tobacco smoke, data from the United States shows that certain minority groups remain disproportionately affected.

For lead exposure, case studies from all three countries demonstrate improvements in children's blood lead levels due to interventions such as the removal of lead from gasoline. However, there is little biomonitoring data available in Canada since there has been no national blood level survey in the country since 1978. Other exposure pathways for lead remain a concern, such as older homes with lead-based paint. Recently collected data in the United States show that 25 percent of homes have a "significant lead-based paint hazard, which could be from deteriorating paint, contaminated dust or contaminated soil outside the house."

Mexico faces the region's largest challenges in the area of water and sanitation. Data from 2003 indicate that 17 percent of the Mexican population did not have water of appropriate bacteriological quality. However, advances in water and sanitation in Mexico have contributed to a decline in diarrheic diseases from a rate of 125.6 deaths per 100,000 children in 1990 to 20 deaths per 100,000 children in 2002. In the United States, the percentage of children living in an area served by a public water system having at least one major monitoring and reporting violation decreased from 22 percent in 1993 to 10 percent in

1999.

Indicators are important to tracking and communicating the health and well-being of North America's 123 million children because environmental contaminants can affect the young quite differently than adults. Children generally eat more food, drink more water and breathe more air relative to their size than adults do, and children's normal activities—such as putting their hands in their mouths or playing outdoors—can result in higher exposures to certain contaminants. In addition, environmental contaminants may affect children disproportionately because their immune defenses, for example, are not fully developed and their organs are more easily harmed.

The CEC, the International Joint Commission, the Pan American Health Organization, the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), and the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States collaborated in the development and selection of the children's environmental health indicators and the release of the report. As the first regional report under the [Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators \(CEHI\)](#)—led by WHO, spearheaded by the US EPA and launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg—it is anticipated that this report will contribute to worldwide efforts to improve children's health. Children's Environmental Health regional indicator pilot projects are currently underway in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Eastern Mediterranean. WHO plans on rolling out similar projects in its Southeast Asia and Western Pacific regions in the coming years.

A copy of the report, along with the national reports compiled by each of the three governments as source material for the CEC's North American report, can be downloaded from www.cec.org/children

(3) OECD recent publications relating to Children's Environmental Health

[Two OECD publications relating to children's environmental health](#) were recently published:

'[Children's Environmental Health Indicators: A Survey](#)' proposes an overview of the current programmes designed to elaborate children's environmental health indicators. It also examines their consistency with OECD guidelines on the development and measurement of indicators.

'[The Valuation Of Environmental Health Risks To Children: Methodological And Policy Issues](#)' proposes an in-depth analysis of the main methodological difficulties associated with estimating the social value of a reduction in risk to children. It also underlines key policy implications and inputs for further research.

(4) International Conference on Chemicals Management

The [International Conference on Chemicals Management \(ICCM\)](#) is expected to adopt the [Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management](#) (SAICM), a new global policy framework that has been under negotiation these past two years. The process was initiated by UNEP Governing Council in 2002 and later endorsed by WSSD. The conference will take place from Saturday 4 to Monday 6 February 2006 at the Dubai International Convention Centre (also known as the World Trade Centre), United Arab Emirates. ICCM will precede the [ninth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum](#), to be held in the same venue from 7 to 9 February 2006.

A Ministerial panel discussion will be held during the high-level segment (6 February) of the ICCM on 'Environment and Health' (with particular reference to women and children's health), organized by the 'Network of Women Ministers for the Environment', coordinated by the Swedish Environment Minister.

(5) UNEP-ILO 'Labour and Environment'

[The Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment](#), organized by UNEP in co-operation with

the International Labour Organization (ILO), Sustainlabour and the Global Compact was held from 15-17 January 2006, at UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi. It aimed to reinforce the social and labour dimension of environmental conservation and sustainable development. At the opening session, Dr. Maria Neira, on behalf of WHO, emphasised that the issue of health provides the most powerful thread to drive sustainable development as well as the Trade Union agendas. Dr. Neira announced that the WHO would soon publish a report showing that 25% of diseases in the world are linked to environmental factors, and that 13 million fatalities could be avoided each year if we worked together to promote environmental health. Klaus Toepfer, UNEP's Executive Director, said at the close of the Assembly: "Trade Unions and their role in the workplace can be a catalyst for positive environmental change while bearing witness to occupational practices that have the potential to harm or improve not only workers and their families but planet Earth as a whole." A wide-ranging strategy to mainstream environment and sustainable development within the trade unions movement was adopted.

UNEP and ILO issued a poster series on labour and environment, available on-line at http://hq.unep.org/DPDL/civil_society/labour_environment/images/index.htm A number of the posters deal with children's environment health-related issues, some examples: "Over 1.7 billion tons of feul wood is burnt each year in developing countries, causing severe lung and other health problems"; "73 million working children are below 10 years old. Every year 22,000 children die in work-related accidents", "children work because their survival and that of their families depend on it. Most children work in the informal sector, without legal or regulatory protection"; "The economic benefits of eliminating child labour will be seven times greater that the costs, not to mention the incalculable social and human benefits"; "Over the next decade, 500 million younf people are expected to enter the world's workforce"; "40,000 agricultural workers die each year from exposure to pesticides. Agrochemicals are linked to long-term illnesses, reproductiveimpairments and ongoing harm to the Earth's ecosystems"; "Around the world, accidents and the inadequate management of harzardous chemicals and wastes kill or sicken countless thousands of people every year and cause wide-ranging impacts on the environment"; "Unsanitary water, which provides a breeding ground for parasites and bacteria, damages the health of 1.2 billion people a year"; "Harzardous chemicals form major health risks for workers, damage the nervous and immune systems, cause cancers and reproductive disorders and interfere with child development"; "Women and giels in Africa are disproportionately affected by poverty and are frequently trapped in the lowest paid, least-skilled and most precarious occupations"; "There are approximately 250 million children worldwide aged between 5 and 14 who are working, of whom 125 million are full-time, doing work that is damaging to mental and physical health and emotional development"; "An estimated one million people in Africa die from malaria each year. Lost labour days due to malaria account for approximately 5% of Africa's entire GDP. The use of DDT in Africa to control malaria is highly controversial. On the one hand it has been historically effective, on the other hand, it introduces a toxic agent into the food chain.

(6) Philippines: children's environmental health activities

Dr. Irma Makalinao, Associate Professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, will be conducting a 'train the trainors' seminar meeting for about 25-30 people on children's environmental health for the Department of Health (9-11 March 2006), with funding support from the Department of Health. She is organizing it through the Philippine Society of Clinical and Occupational Toxicology where she is the President. The participants from the Department of Health will include two representatives from each region of the country one coming from environment pillar and the other one is from the IMCI pillar (Integrated Management of Childhood Illness). Participants will, inter alia, find or develop applicable indicators.

Dr. Makalinao will be making a presentation (on 14 February 2006) to the Department of Pharmacology on a university-based continuing post-graduate course on "Teaching a Faculty to Teach Pediatric Environmental Health". The aim is to create a sustainable training program to increase the critical mass

of people who think about the link between health and the environments of children through the University of the Philippines College of Medicine Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology Graduate Program where she is the current head. The course would prepare the accredited medical universities to teach a core curriculum of pediatric environmental health for the medical students so that the awareness level can be raised while they are still students, so that if they decide to become general practitioners they are already able to made a good history and refer patients accordingly.

(7) Training on children's environmental health for nurses in Mombasa

As a follow-up to the IPA/WHO/UNEP Workshop for African Pediatricians and others in the health-care sector on Children's Health and the Environment, which was held in Nairobi (12-14 October 2005), two of the nurses that participated (Eileen Mwaluma and Jacinta Gini) are planning a two day workshop at The Coast Provincial General Hospital in Mombasa. They are working with the National Nurses Association of Kenya Coast General Hospital Branch, where they are active members under the Private Nurses Practitioner Chapter. They have identified 30 participants, 20 from the Coast Provincial Hospital Medical personnel and 10 from the Private Nurse Practitioners. Tentative dates for the workshop will be 15th and 16th of February 2006 and for the Community Mobilization will on 15th and 16th of March 2006 in two different communities respectively.

(8) Vulnerability of the Fetus and Infant to Ambient Pollutants and Reduced Food Intake in Pregnancy - Krakow, Poland, June 2-3, 2006

'Vulnerability of the Fetus and Infant to Ambient Pollutants and Reduced Food Intake in Pregnancy' - Krakow, Poland, June 2-3, 2006: The purpose of the Conference is to assess the weight of evidence and assemble new achievements on the effects of prenatal and early postnatal exposure to ambient and indoor pollutants such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, particulate matter, and environmental tobacco smoke on fetal/child growth, neurobehavioral development, and childhood health status. Another purpose of this Conference is also to assess fetal responses to the changes in intrauterine environment caused by reduced food intake around the time of conception and during pregnancy.

ARTICLES

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

Environmentalists Worry on China's Kangs Scientists warn that kang waste fuel, pollute the atmosphere and endanger the health of farm families by releasing carbon monoxide and other dangerous gases indoors. An estimated 80 percent to 90 percent of farm families in China's northeast use kang. Joe McDonald. Associated Press. 9 January 2006.

Action for Indoor Air The International Academy of Indoor Air Sciences called on the governments, institutions, and corporations of the world to invest more in reducing indoor air pollution. World Health Organization estimates that indoor solid fuel burning causes about 1.6 million premature deaths annually, mainly among women and children. Erin Dooley. Environmental Health Perspectives. January 2006.

Prevalence and Implementation of IAQ Programs in U.S. Schools We determined the extent to which U.S. schools are implementing indoor air quality (IAQ) programs. Respondents indicated that IAQ programs led to improved workplace satisfaction, fewer asthma attacks, fewer visits to the school nurse, and lower absenteeism. Dena Moglia et al. Environmental Health Perspectives. January 2006.

State working to improve daycare environment The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services will begin working with daycare providers this month to reduce children's exposure to indoor

air pollutants like radon and lead paint. Harmful exposure to such chemicals can cause respiratory illnesses and learning disabilities. [Associated Press](#). 14 January 2006.

[Take precautions with heating sources](#) While encouraging energy efficiency and conservation, EPA wants to remind residents that there are environmental and health concerns associated with some heating sources. Particle pollution is especially a concern because it can cause serious health effects, especially in children and older people. Editorial. [Springfield Republican](#), Massachusetts. 25 January 2006.

[Study finds toxic threat in auto interiors](#) A report concluding that toxic chemicals are present in automobile interiors at levels 5 to 10 times higher than those found in homes and offices has sparked protests from the chemical industry and interest from automakers. In 2003, the CDC said phthalates could cause developmental problems in children. Jeff Plungis. [Detroit News](#). 30 January 2006.

(b) Outdoor air pollution

[Rising levels hit children's health](#) The next time your child complains of a burning sensation in his eyes and teachers point to a dip in his performance, don't take it lightly. Chances are he has fallen victim to the thickening layer of nitrogen dioxide in the air. Paediatricians and environmentalists are worried about this increasing content of NO₂ in the air. Maneesh Pandey. [Bombay Times of India](#). 13 January 2006.

[Rising use of diesel in Uganda raises concern over health](#) With consumption of diesel having surpassed petrol in Uganda, environmentalists are raising concern over risks to the environment and human health. Studies show that diesel engines are a major source of fine-particle pollution. Esther Nakkazi. [Nairobi East African Standard](#), Kenya. 5 January 2006.

[Proposed new air rules won't clear pollution](#) The federal EPA had a chance to take a bold step toward cleaner air when it proposed new rules for the regulation of particulate pollution. The agency did as little as possible. Some studies suggest that long-term exposure has a cumulative effect. Children and the elderly are particularly susceptible. Editorial. [Modesto Bee](#), California. 5 January 2006.

[Ignoring science on clean air](#) At best, proposed rules represent only a modest tightening of the rules - despite considerable additional research, some 2,000 studies altogether, expanding the list of adverse health effects associated with fine particles (especially among children) and, collectively, pointing to the need for stronger standards. [Registration Required]. Editorial. [New York Times](#). 17 January 2006.

[New Report Finds One-Third of All Americans Threatened by Soot Pollution](#) 32% of the population live in areas with unsafe levels of fine particle, or "soot," pollution, according to a report. "Soot pollution is a serious health risk. Children, senior citizens, and even healthy adults suffer asthma attacks and other health problems from soot pollution." Press Release. [Public Interest Research Group](#). 19 January 2006.

[Bad air increases pressure on polluters](#) Poor air quality in many Swiss cities has prompted plans for a raft of new measures to curb emissions of cancer-causing dust particles. The environment minister, Moritz Leuenberger, on Monday proposed nine new measures aimed at reducing the thousands of deaths caused annually by pollution. SwissInfo. [Neue Zürcher Zeitung](#), Switzerland. 17 January 2006.

[\\$6-M air quality monitoring project goes pffft!](#) Toulene is a solvent added to gasoline to produce benzene. Chronic inhalation or exposure of humans to toulene could cause sore throat, dizziness, headaches and developmental problems in children. Blanche Rivera. [Philippine Daily Inquirer](#), Philippines. 30 January 2006.

[Endangered village presages a crisis](#) In Oktyabrskoye, a Siberian village 60 miles from the Chinese border, the Soviet-era uranium-mining industry has left behind an environmental mess. "We're old already. But these little ones have to grow up here. The wind blows everything here. There's nothing to breathe." Catherine Belton. The Moscow Times. 12 January 2006.

[Pollution Fears Surround Ossetian Zinc Factory](#) "It's difficult to breathe, especially in bad weather," said 20 year old Alina. "It's poison, like a gas attack!" added Galina, 42. "You can't take your child out for a walk. Residents of Vladikavkaz say the air they breathe is badly polluted, and they blame a zinc plant in the city. Viktor Buividas. Environment News Service. 23 January 2006.

[Koeberg the source of Khayelitsha's bad air?](#) Air pollution researchers are to conduct more tests this year on caesium levels in Khayelitsha, after they found "well above expected" background levels. South Africans' constitutional right to "an environment that is not detrimental to health and well-being" was violated by poor air quality. John Yeld. Cape Argus Independent, South Africa. 26 January 2006.

[Parents should know what their children are breathing](#) Should parents have the right to learn how much benzene is in the air near their children? A French study found children living near gas stations were 4 times more likely to have contracted leukemia. Those living for longer periods near a gas station experienced higher leukemia rates. Lisa Arkin. Eugene Register Guard, Oregon. 14 January 2006.

[Asthma now hits one in 10 children, study says](#) Fourfold increase linked to air quality. The rate of childhood asthma in Canada has soared fourfold over the past 20 years, to a level where more than one out of every 10 children is now diagnosed with the respiratory illness. [Registration required]. Martin Mittelstaedt. Toronto Globe and Mail. 27 January 2006.

[Choking on gridlock](#) A report found children riding on school buses were at risk of being exposed to more polluted air. The association recommended the province set up a Healthy School Bus Program, aimed at reducing harmful emissions from school buses. This exposure represents a significant public health concern. Tanya Talaga. Toronto Star, Ontario. 20 January 2006.

[Think green, Vermont: don't idle engines](#) Shutting off the car engine rather than letting it idle should be as automatic as wearing a seatbelt. Children are sitting on idling school buses every day, breathing in noxious fumes from the tailpipe. The environment and our children's health are precious. Editorial. Burlington Free Press, Vermont. 10 January 2006.

[Lyme-Old Lyme gets grant to reduce buses' emissions](#) The Lyme-Old Lyme school district recently received a federal grant to replace fuel in school buses with a cleaner diesel fuel and to retrofit the buses with diesel filters. [Purchase required]. Jenna Cho. New London Day, Connecticut. 11 January 2006.

[Local buses to run cleaner after grant: Lyme-Old Lyme wins \\$167,000 from EPA](#) Erica Gradecki. Shore Publishing, Connecticut. 27 January 2006.

[Grant to fuel biodiesel buses](#) The St. Charles Parish public school system could become the first school district in Louisiana to run its buses on biodiesel fuel. Sandra Barbier. New Orleans Times-Picayune, Louisiana. 19 January 2006.

[Hitchens Elementary shut down](#) The Three Rivers School Board voted Monday to permanently close Meredith Hitchens Elementary School in Addyston because of findings of higher than normal levels of certain air pollutants. Denise Smith Amos. Cincinnati Enquirer, Ohio. 24 January 2006.

(c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking

[Secondhand smoke unhealthy for kids](#) More than 15 million children are exposed to secondhand smoke everyday, and more than 280 children die each year as a result of respiratory illnesses caused by secondhand smoke inhalation. [Registration required]. Sally Robinson and Keith Bly. Galveston Daily News, Texas. 5 January 2006.

[Findings: studies show hazards of environmental tobacco smoke](#) U.S. officials have concluded secondhand smoke causes lung cancer and heart disease. Children raised by smokers can be more than 3 times at risk of developing lung cancer as adults. More than 120,000 Europeans were tracked for an average of seven years (British Medical Journal, January 2005). Salt Lake Tribune, Utah. 24 January 2006.

[Lawmakers call smoke a pollutant](#) California regulators declared secondhand tobacco smoke a toxic air pollutant. It causes 31,000 episodes of asthma in children, 1,600 instances of low birth weights and 4,700 cases of women delivering pre-term babies, an increase in respiratory tract and middle ear infections for infants and young children. Sandy Kleffman. Contra Costa Times, California. 27 January 2006.

[Secondhand smoke toxic air contaminant](#) Jane Kay. San Francisco Chronicle, California. 27 January 2006.

[California Identifies Secondhand Smoke as a Toxic Air Contaminant](#) Environment News Service. 27 January 2006.

[California tobacco smoke 'toxic'](#) BBC. 27 January 2006.

[California Classifies Second-Hand Smoke a Toxic Risk](#) Reuters. 27 January 2006.

[Toxic to air, health](#) Secondhand smoke damages the health of everyone forced into its fog. The state EPA experts report that secondhand smoke increases the cases of heart and lung cancer deaths in the state. They link it to sudden infant death syndrome, newborns' low birth weights and premature births. Editorial. Contra Costa Times, California. 30 January 2006.

[Closing in on smokers](#) Editorial. Lompoc Record, California. 30 January 2006.

[Air panel to act on cancer studies](#) California air regulators are to vote on whether to accept findings by researchers that secondhand smoke causes breast cancer. The report also found stronger links between secondhand smoke and sudden infant death syndrome, premature births, and other cancers and respiratory diseases. [Registration Required]. Janet Wilson. Los Angeles Times, California. 26 January 2006.

[Ask the doctor: secondhand smoke, inherited susceptibility could be triggering young boys' asthma](#) Nobody knows exactly what causes asthma, but a popular theory is that there are many factors. These factors include a genetic predisposition from various genes and environmental triggers that interact to create mild to severe asthma. Leslie Evans. Asheville Citizen-Times, North Carolina. 10 January 2006.

[Smoking linked to finger, toe deformities](#) US plastic surgeons found smoking during pregnancy significantly elevates the risk of having a child with excess, webbed or missing fingers and toes. "This study shows that even minimal smoking during pregnancy can significantly increase the risk of having a child with various toe and finger defects." United Press International. 6 January 2006.

[Smokers run higher risk of deformed offspring](#) Monsters and Critics.com, UK. 9 January 2006.

[Of smoking mothers and deformed babies](#) [Registration required]. Newindpress, India. 7 January 2006.

[Smoking when pregnant causes finger abnormalities](#) Datamonitor Newswire. [Pharmaceutical Business Review](#). 6 January 2006.

[New study shows the more pregnant women smoke, the more likely their babies will have toe or finger defects](#) Scripps Howard News Service. [Newsday](#), New York. 16 January 2006.

[Perinatal Environmental Tobacco Smoke Exposure in Rhesus Monkeys](#). Our results provide a mechanistic connection between perinatal ETS exposure and neurobehavioral anomalies, reinforce the role of nicotine in these effects, and buttress the importance of restricting or eliminating ETS exposure in young children. Theodore Slotkin et al. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). January 2006.

[Europe's 'no smoking' zones](#) On 1 January, Spain became the latest country to ban smokers from public places. They can only smoke in the smoking areas, where children are prohibited. In Hungary, a 1997 Child Protection Act also states that children have the right to be protected from environmental hazards and substances harmful to health. [Purchase required]. [London Independent](#), England. 5 January 2006.

[Shutting down the schoolyard smokers](#) Today, when Oregon public schools reopen after the holiday break, there'll be no smoking allowed by anyone, anywhere on school property. The new rule is an important, overdue step toward protecting Oregon young people from the risks of tobacco. Editorial. [Portland Oregonian](#), Oregon. 3 January 2006.

[Americans decide that smoke-free is the way to be](#) Smoking rates among adults and children continue to decrease and smoke-free indoor policies, ordinances and statutes are steadily increasing in number. Children will grow up with it, and pass it on as a norm to their children. Richard Feldman. [Indianapolis Star](#), Indiana. 17 January 2006.

[At last! Learning to breathe free](#) Smoke harms those around, particularly children. We know pregnant women who smoke give birth to smaller babies and babies who live with people who smoke are more likely to die from SIDS. We know that kids who grow up exposed to smoke are more likely to contract asthma and other respiratory ailments. Cindy Richards. [Chicago Sun-Times](#), Illinois. 18 January 2006.

[Student group aims to ban smoking in parks](#) An anti-drug and anti-tobacco coalition is hoping to get city officials to ban the use of tobacco at all the city's parks and playgrounds. The presence of secondhand smoke at these events presents a health hazard as well as exhibiting poor role modeling for the children present. Kathleen Durand. [Fall River Herald News](#), Massachusetts. 23 January 2006.

(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General

[E-Waste@Large](#) Keeping toxic computer trash from our dumps won't mean a thing if we don't forbid the export of hazardous material to underdeveloped nations. A documentary showed Chinese workers, including children, using hammers and chisels to pry copper and aluminum from computers, burning PVC-coated wires. [Registration Required]. Elizabeth Royte. [New York Times](#). 27 January 2006.

[Denmark to Sue EU Over Flame Retardant Linked to Birth Defects](#) The Danish government plans to challenge the European Commission over approval of a flame retardant that may cause birth defects and cancer. [Environment News Service](#). 4 January 2006.

[Washington State Agencies Urge Ban on Toxic Flame Retardant](#) The Washington State Departments of Ecology and Health called for a legislated ban on all forms of the toxic flame retardants (PBDEs), as part of a [state plan to eliminate them](#). "We want to keep our children safe, but we can't do it unless the state legislature does its part to enact a ban on PBDEs." [Environment News Service](#). 23 January 2006.

[Chemical mixtures more toxic than their parts](#) Chemical mixtures can be vastly more toxic to humans and creatures than a single chemical, suggesting current efforts to assess health risks posed by such compounds underestimate their danger. Swan has found similar problems in baby boys born to women with high levels of phthalates. Douglas Fischer. Oakland Tribune, California. 25 January 2006.

[Parents needn't wait for legislation to shield kids from toxins in products](#) State legislators will hear testimony Tuesday on an issue that should attract the attention of parents everywhere: How to improve the safety of numerous toys and baby-care products that contain toxic chemicals. Shanna H. Swan. San Francisco Chronicle, California. 9 January 2006.

[Ban on use of toxic materials in baby products founders](#) A controversial Assembly bill that would have banned two toxic compounds in plastic baby products died Thursday after supporters could not round up enough support from members of the Appropriations Committee. [Registration Required]. Marla Cone. Los Angeles Times, California. 20 January 2006.

[Scientists debate bill to restrict chemicals](#) Scientists on Tuesday debated the health risks of two chemicals found in plastic baby products as California legislators consider a bill that ban their use in those products. [Registration Required] Marla Cone. Los Angeles Times, California. 11 January 2006.

[California lawmakers hear testimony about toy safety](#) Peter Hecht. Scripps Howard News Service. 11 January 2006.

[Push to ban some chemicals used in baby products](#) Marcy Valenzuela. Sacramento CBS 13, California. 11 January 2006.

[Supposed toxic toy danger debated](#) Sacramento KCRA TV, California. 11 January 2006.

[Needless fear drives proposed plastics ban](#) Everyone wants to protect the health of children, but the bill banning bisphenol A from children's products is unnecessary, scientifically unsupportable and counterproductive. Lorenz Rhomberg. San Francisco Chronicle, California. 17 January 2006.

[Your car could be making you sick](#) Chemicals that settled as dust and film in cars are found at levels that could pose health problems. There is a growing worry that PBDEs and phthalates may be accumulating at dangerous levels in humans - damaging developing fetuses and children in ways that are only starting to be understood. Hugh Mcdiarmid Jr. Detroit Free Press, Michigan. 12 January 2006.

[Toxic chemicals found in vehicles](#) Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow. Arlington Advocate, Massachusetts. 19 January 2006.

[East Bay moms crusade for breast milk safety](#) Concerned by mounting evidence of environmental toxins in breast milk, a group of Bay Area mothers launched Making Our Milk Safe or "MOMS," an Alameda-based advocacy group that lobbies on behalf of the nation's youngest citizens. Jackie Burrell. Contra Costa Times, California. 21 January 2006.

[Study: Half breast cancers tied to environment](#) As many as half of all breast cancers may be foisted upon woman by pollutants in the environment. "[State of the Evidence](#)" buttresses what many researchers suspect: that repeated low doses-particularly in early childhood-to chemicals normally considered harmless can have a profound effect. Douglas Fischer. Oakland Tribune, California. 25 January 2006.

[Breast cancer risks seen in everyday items](#) Bob Ivry. Bergen County Record, New Jersey. 25 January 2006.

[Chemicals cause thousands of preventable cancer deaths, American says](#) A professor says Canada's

"cancer establishment" and multinational corporations are hiding vital information about cancer-causing chemicals in the environment. There is a failure to respond to alarming increases in non-smoking related cancers, especially among children. Steve Arnold. Hamilton Spectator, Ontario. 26 January 2006.

[Don't dilute pollution law](#) It might be poisonous emissions wafting from a nearby manufacturing plant. Or it might be the odor surrounding a plan being pushed in Washington that would make it harder for neighbors and local officials in hundreds of communities to know what potentially deadly pollution risks they're being exposed to. Editorial. USA Today. 11 January 2006.

[Maintain rules on toxic wastes](#) Editorial. Scranton Times Tribune, Pennsylvania. 17 January 2006.

[Teflon chemical on EPA hit list](#) The U.S. EPA plans to list a toxic chemical used to make Teflon alongside such well-known persistent pollutants as mercury, lead and PCBs, signaling increasing alarm about its potential effects on human health. Michael Hawthorne. Chicago Tribune, Illinois. 26 January 2006.

[Manganese in Drinking Water](#) Higher Doses May Hamper Intellectual Function. Manganese is an essential nutrient for humans, but its excessive consumption can cause adverse health impacts. A group of U.S. researchers suggests that ingesting high doses of manganese in drinking water can hamper intellectual function in children. Dinesh Sharma. Environmental Health Perspectives. January 2006.

[Water Manganese Exposure and Children's Intellectual Function in Araihasar, Bangladesh](#) Gail A. Wasserman et al. Environmental Health Perspectives. January 2006.

[Utah will test water for rocket fuel chemical](#) The state will test groundwater for perchlorate amid growing concern about its presence in drinking water. Some studies suggest that perchlorate poses no danger; others indicate that even tiny concentrations disrupt the thyroids of fetuses and young children, which manage development and the brain. Joe Baird/Judy Fahys. Salt Lake Tribune, Utah. 4 January 2006.

[Critics rip EPA well-water standard](#) The US EPA on Thursday proposed a cleanup standard for a rocket fuel ingredient that's four times weaker than the level proposed by California and is woefully inadequate to protect fetuses and children, critics said. Andrew Silva. San Bernardino County Sun, California. 27 January 2006.

[Is is safe to eat salmon?](#) A report from researchers concludes that, for most people, the potential cancer risks of eating salmon containing toxic chemicals outweigh the benefits gained from consuming the fish. She singled out young people at risk of lifetime accumulation of the carcinogenic pollutants and pregnant women concerned about birth defects and IQ loss in the fetus. Toronto Star, Ontario. 6 January 2006.

[American warning for Norwegian salmon](#) Aftenposten, Norway. 4 January 2006.

[Oily fish makes 'babies brainier'](#) Eating oily fish and seeds in pregnancy can boost children's future brain power and social skills, research suggests. The richest sources of Omega-3 are larger fish which eat other fish, but research shows that the larger the fish the more pollutants, such as mercury, they contain. BBC. 20 January 2006.

[In praise of omega-3s](#) Dealing with maternal malnutrition (which is not the same as undernutrition) is even more important, because environmental damage wrought in the womb is as irreversible as the

effects of bad genes. It is surely cheaper to make interventions that have an impact early on than to react later. Economist. 21 January 2006.

[The omega point](#) Economist. 21 January 2006.

[Fishing banned in polluted Sydney Harbour](#) Commercial fishing has been banned in Sydney's famously beautiful harbour due to dangerous levels of poisonous dioxin being found in prawns and fish. The dioxin, which can cause cancer and birth defects, was a hangover from past industrial waste. AFP 23 January 2006.

[Moving Mountains in Appalachia](#) An Eastern Kentucky University study found that children in Letcher County suffer from an alarmingly high rate of nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, and shortness of breath, symptoms of something called blue baby syndrome, that can be traced back to sedimentation and dissolved minerals that have drained from mine sites into streams. Erik Reece. Orion. 10 January 2006.

[Group requests more PCB tests](#) As state and federal regulators continue to insist that Allendale Elementary School is safe from PCB pollution, a group of parents and teachers last night issued a statement challenging that assertion and asked for yet more testing of the building and schoolyard. Jack Dew. Pittsfield Berkshire Eagle, Massachusetts. 19 January 2006.

[Sandwich awaits results of child cancer study](#) Results of a Massachusetts investigation into whether there are elevated cancer rates among children in Sandwich are expected to be released. The study would look at where children with cancer in Sandwich live in relation to each other and to "areas of environmental concern. Robin Lord. Cape Cod Times, Massachusetts. 23 January 2006.

[Belgian authorities to close more farms](#) Belgian authorities have decided to temporarily close more farms after they found traces of a carcinogenic chemical in animal feed, authorities said Monday. Dioxin accumulates in the body and has been linked to cancer, birth defects and organ failure. Associated Press. 30 January 2006.

[Youths at risk from dioxins](#) Levels of dioxins found at a defunct wood treatment plant here could pose health risks for young people, according to a new report from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Ryan Lafontaine. Biloxi Sun Herald, Mississippi. 26 January 2006.

[Toxic ground bid dropped](#) A controversial plan to build a childcare centre on land previously contaminated with asbestos and other chemicals in Yarraville, Australia has been dropped. Star News Group, Australia. 10 January 2006.

[Expert: Gorham site needs cleanup](#) An environmental scientist at the University of Connecticut has concluded that the city should not build a high school on the former Gorham manufacturing site without first cleaning up the land around Mashapaug Pond. Linda Borg. Providence Journal, Rhode Island. 11 January 2006.

[Plan calls for new pipes at schools](#) An oversight committee wants Seattle Public Schools to replace water pipes in nearly half the district's schools -- a proposition that would protect thousands of children from heavy-metal contamination. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Washington. 4 January 2006.

[Pennsylvania Families With Newborns Get Free Radon Test Kits](#) The government of Pennsylvania offering more families free radon test kits to help them protect themselves and their children from the country's second leading cause of lung cancer. Environment News Service. 6 January 2006.

(b) Lead

[No "safe" lead level seen for fetal brain](#) Exposure to even small amounts of lead through a mother's blood may harm the brain development of unborn babies, a new study suggests. Researchers in Mexico found that maternal blood lead levels well below 10 mcg/dL appeared to have a lasting impact on their children's IQ, at least up to the age of 10. Amy Norton. Reuters. 20 January 2006.

[Era of leaded gas comes to an end in most of Africa](#) The import and refining of leaded gasoline ended throughout sub-Saharan Africa at the stroke of midnight Saturday. The lead in the air finds its way into children through contaminated soil and food. [Registration Required]. Craig Timberg. Washington Post. 1 January 2006.

[UN hails green triumph as leaded petrol is banned throughout Africa](#) [Purchase Required]. Geoffrey Lean. London Independent. 1 January 2006.

[Africa's ban on leaded petrol](#) Editorial. Lagos Independent News, Nigeria. 11 January 2006.

[Kenya phases out leaded fuel](#) Philip Mwakio. Nairobi East African Standard, Kenya. 27 January 2006.

[Leaded Petrol Stock Cleared](#) Kenya Pipeline has cleared all stocks of leaded petrol from its depots in compliance with the Dakar Protocol, which requires leaded fuel to be phased out beginning January 1. Kennedy Senelwa. NEMA said studies had shown that children living near roads and in urban areas where leaded petrol is used suffered brain damage. The Nation, Nairobi. 3 January 2006.

[Students tell gov't to get the lead out](#) Dozens of high school students protested about the dangers of lead pollution in the air at the National Monument in Central Jakarta on Saturday. Edi said lead was toxic and could damage human nervous systems, especially in young children, with long exposure proven to cause a series of blood and brain disorders. Jakarta Post, Indonesia. 30 January 2006.

[SA to regulate lead levels in paint](#) The national health department will move to regulate the use of lead in manufacturing paint used on furniture and toys. High levels of lead in the blood were known to have long-term adverse health and social effects for both children and adults. SAPA. Business Day, South Africa. 27 January 2006.

[Displaced Roma in Kosovo to leave lead-tainted camps, UN says](#) A newly-refurbished camp will open for internally displaced Roma populations in Kosovo that are enduring unhealthy lead levels. UNMIK said the new camp will closely follow recommendations by WHO to protect children and pregnant women from lead poisoning. Press Release. UN Mission in Kosovo. 6 January 2006.

[Top UN Kosovo envoy urges Roma to move to newlyrefurbished camp](#) Press Release. United Nations. 11 January 2006.

[Dally no longer: Get the lead out](#) There's no question that children who are still being permanently damaged by excessive lead levels live mainly at the poverty level or near it, in neighborhoods where they can be poisoned by lead from contaminated paint, water, soil and dust. [Registration Required]. Jane E. Brody. New York Times. 17 January 2006.

[Lead poisoning leading health risk to children](#) Lead poisoning is often thought to be a problem of the past, but it is still the leading environmental health risk to children, according to officials with the Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency (NMCHA). Gaylord Herald Times, Michigan. 24 January 2006.

[Lead levels in breast milk invariably low](#) Findings from a new study should provide some reassurance to breastfeeding mothers that even if they've been exposed to high amounts of lead, very little of this toxin is excreted in their breast milk. Michelle Rizzo. Reuters Health. 12 January 2006.

[EPA Helps Schools and Child Care Facilities Reduce Lead in Drinking Water](#) EPA has released a specialized toolkit to encourage school officials and child care facilities to reduce lead in their drinking water. "An unhealthy school environment is a serious barrier to learning." Press Release. US Environmental Protection Agency. 26 January 2006.

[EPA questioned on lead in drinking water](#) The government has incomplete data about lead in the country's drinking water, and that problem and others may be undermining public health, congressional investigators say. "It is unacceptable that the Bush administration cannot account for the water quality of more than 33 million Californians, including our children." Erica Werner. Associated Press. 27 January

[Blood Lead Concentrations in Children and Method of Water Fluoridation in the United States, 1988-1994](#) Some have hypothesized that water containing sodium silicofluoride and hydrofluosilicic acid may increase blood lead concentrations in children by leaching of lead from water conduits and by increasing absorption of lead from water. Mark Macek et al. Environmental Health Perspectives. January 2006.

[EPA publishes proposed lead paint rules for contractors](#) EPA has published proposed regulations that would affect contractors working on older homes that contain lead-based paints. John said he thought they provided some positive steps to further protect young children, who are the primary victims of lead paint poisoning. Peter Lord. Providence Journal, Rhode Island. 8 January 2006.

[New rules posted for lead-paint removal](#) [Registration Required]. Al Heavens. Philadelphia Inquirer, Pennsylvania. 15 January 2006.

[EPA targets lead hazards](#) Dr. Theresa Berger. Asbury Park Press, New Jersey. 18 January 2006.

[Lawyer, historian spar over lead paint](#) - To prove that paint companies created a public nuisance by making and marketing lead-based paints two generations ago. Lawyers presented articles in which doctors repeatedly blamed lead-poisoning cases on children gnawing on cribs and toys, rather than paints wearing off houses. Peter B. Lord. Providence Journal, Rhode Island. 19 January 2006.

[Lead paint case could go to jury next week](#) Peter B. Lord. Providence Journal, Rhode Island. 30 January 2006.

[Groups to study lead paint problem](#) The state passed a law to prevent lead poisoning 13 years ago, but still, every year an estimated 275 Vermont children end up with dangerous amounts of lead in their blood. Medical professionals, landlords, and child and housing advocates came together to begin building a state action plan. Howard Weiss-Tisman. Brattleboro Reformer, Vermont. 21 January 2006.

[EPA gets the lead out in Vt](#) Howard Weiss-Tisman. Brattleboro Reformer, Vermont. 26 January 2006.

[Picher residents pushing for total federal buyout](#) In an effort to protect children from lead poisoning in the community, Oklahoma funded a \$3 million buyout and relocation of 57 families with small children. Small children are most susceptible to problems associated with exposure to lead that can cause permanent damage to developing nervous systems. Wally Kennedy. Joplin Globe, Missouri. 5 January 2006.

[Help families get the lead out](#) An estimated 7 percent of Iowa children have high lead levels in their

blood four times the national average. Here is the logical course of action: Help low-income families remove lead paint from their homes. Editorial. Des Moines Register, Iowa. 3 January 2006.

[Paint industry not so virtuous](#) Prior to a July 2005 Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling, the legal hurdle for children who suffered lead paint poisoning was the inability to identify the specific company that made or sold a particular paint in their home. Peter G. Earle. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wisconsin. 3 January 2006.

[Lead paint veto makes no sense](#) George Ott. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wisconsin. 23 January 2006.

[Lead paint rules, too little too late?](#) Lead paint got a lot of press in the 1970's, but even today there are nearly 300,000 kids with high lead levels. Now the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency wants to protect children when older homes get a facelift. Shawn Allee. Great Lakes Radio Consortium, Michigan. 23 January 2006.

[Inzunza's tenants await fixes](#) National City Mayor Nick Inzunza vowed to start renovating his rental properties. Medical providers must notify the state when a child tests positive for lead poisoning. When a child under 6 has 10 or more micrograms of lead in the blood, lead abatement is mandatory. Tanya Sierra. San Diego Union-Tribune, California. 9 January 2006.

[Groups express concern over pace of lead removal in St. Louis](#) Several community groups have accused the city of St. Louis of not doing enough to rid older homes of lead, placing children at risk for poisoning and delayed development. Cheryl Wittenauer. Associated Press. 4 January 2006.

[Toxic lead leaching from Ford sludge](#) This is really troubling that residents are subjected to this waste where their children play. One paint sludge sample was in a lawn about 10 feet from children's playground equipment. Another was next to the driveway of a home where a 4-year-old boy was found last year to have lead poisoning. Jan Barry. Bergen County Record, New Jersey. 18 January 2006.

[Families sue Ford over waste dumping](#) Mary Jo Layton/Barbara Williams. Bergen County Record, New Jersey. 19 January 2006.

[Curtain opens on Ford suit](#) Mary Jo Layton. Bergen County Record, New Jersey. 20 January 2006.

[Getting the lead out.](#) Editorial, North Jersey Media Group. 24 January 2006.

[Board: Neihart needs help with water supply, soil cleanup](#) The City-County Board of Health is recommending the federal government take additional steps to make sure lead contamination is cleaned up in Neihart. Only one child under the age of six lives in the community. Lead is a significant hazard to children. Sonja Lee. Great Falls Tribune, Montana. 5 January 2006.

[Mexican candy has lead risk](#) A new guidance document drafted last week by the FDA aims to lower children's exposure to small traces of lead present in chili-powder-derived Mexican candy. Dr. Michael Piñón. El Paso Times, Texas. 9 January 2006.

[Effort to remove lead from Mexican treats](#) Carolyn Jones. San Francisco Chronicle, California. 15 January 2006.

[FDA warns of lead in Mexican candy](#) [Purchase required]. Jon Brodtkin. Framingham MetroWest Daily News, Massachusetts. 13 January 2006.

[Open that lunch box and take a bite of doom](#) There is a new item on the lunch menu for kids these days.

Unfortunately, it's lead. Carcinogenic pesticides are on our fruits and vegetables. More than a quarter of a million American children under 5 ingest up to 20 different pesticides every day. Elizabeth Cohen. Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin, New York. 22 January 2006.

(c) Pesticides

[A Case for Revisiting the Safety of Pesticides: A Closer Look at Neurodevelopment](#) Contemporary neurotoxicological studies of pesticides testing impacts are not protective of future generations. The dose range used must be more realistic and transgenerational effects considered. Functional and behavioral endpoints should be given priority. Theo Colborn. Environmental Health Perspectives. January 2006.

[DDT likely once again to lead war against malaria](#) DDT, one of the most effective anti-malaria pesticides, could once again lead Africa's war against malaria after a United States Senate committee heard unanimous arguments in its favour. Malaria still kills 3 000 to 5 000 people a day in Africa. Hugo Hagen. Johannesburg Citizen, South Africa. 24 January 2006.

[S Korea ruling on Agent Orange](#) US makers of the Agent Orange defoliant used in the Vietnam War should compensate a group of South Korean troops it affected, a Seoul court said. In Vietnam, some contend, the dioxin entered the food chain and caused a proliferation of birth defects. Some babies were born without eyes or arms, or were missing internal organs. BBC, UK. 26 January 2006.

[Household insecticides could double child leukaemia risk](#) Children frequently exposed to household insecticides used on plants, lawns and in head lice shampoos appear to run double the risk of developing childhood leukaemia, research suggests. Sam Lister. London Times, England. 17 January 2006.

[House insecticides leukaemia fear](#) BBC, UK. 17 January 2006.

[Pesticides raise child risk of leukaemia](#) Reuters. 17 January 2006.

[Leukaemia, pesticides linked](#) Kamala Hayman. Stuff.co.nz. 18 January 2006.

[New rules govern use of data from testing pesticides on people](#) The Bush administration issued rules governing the use of information collected in tests that expose humans to toxic pesticides, drawing criticism from environmentalists and Democrats. It would prohibit the intentional dosing of pregnant women and children with such poisons. [Registration Required]. Juliet Eilperin. Washington Post. 27 January 2006.

[EPA adopts rules to curb testing of pesticides on some humans](#) William McQuillen. Bloomberg News. 27 January 2006.

[EPA's Latest Human Pesticide Testing Rule Called Illegal, Immoral](#) Three U.S. legislators are asking the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to withdraw a planned rule to permit pesticide experimentation on humans, including pregnant and nursing mothers and children. Environment News Service. 25 January 2006.

[Pesticide tests may use pregnant women, kids](#) The Bush administration would allow some limited pesticide testing on children and pregnant women under controversial rules set to be made final as early as this week. Michael Doyle. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Washington. 24 January 2006.

[EPA to accept pesticide tests on humans](#) John Heilprin. Associated Press. 23 January 2006.

[New pesticide research rules face heavy fire](#) [Registration required]. Sacramento Bee, California. 24 January 2006.

[Toxic sprays are a political issue](#) After a 1998-2003 moratorium on testing pesticides on humans, EPA is about to legalize the practice. EPA's proposed rule says no pregnant women or children can be tested with pesticides but there's no guarantee that studies done on pregnant women and children here or abroad would never be accepted. E.G. Vallianatos. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. 5 January 2006.

[Pesticides: Too little too late](#) On New Year's Eve, Washington State agriculture director Valoria Loveland withdrew a proposal for mandatory notification of pesticide spraying near schools and nursing homes. Editorial. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Washington. 3 January 2006.

[Use California model for Florida ag reforms](#) The Joint Legislative Committee is taking a serious look at the state's shamefully inadequate enforcement of farm pesticide use. The Post reported three Immokalee infants with severe birth defects. Their mothers were migrants who say they were exposed to pesticides while pregnant. Editorial. Palm Beach Post, Florida. 30 January 2006.

[Add pesticide safeguard](#) The bipartisan special commission has some meaningful reforms on its table, but improving pesticide enforcement is the reform work lawmakers must do first. Lawmakers have three new reasons to build on the pesticide legislation of two years ago: three babies, born with severe defects to families of farmworkers in Immokalee. Editorial. Palm Beach Post, Florida. 2 January 2006.

[Wal-Mart plucks tomatoes from stores over pesticide issue](#) Laura Layden. Naples Daily News, Florida. 5 January 2006.

[Replacing Poison with Poison: We Can Do Better](#) Stop the Registration of Methyl Iodide! Fumigation is an inherently risky technology that endangers farm workers, contaminates groundwater, and threatens schools and communities surrounding fumigated fields. Pesticide Action Network Updates Service. January 24, 2006.

[Activists Defend Quebec's Ban on 2,4-D](#) Quebec is on the verge of enacting historic measures to protect public health from unnecessary and dangerous lawn chemicals. "2,4-D is far from safe. It can affect women's ability to bear healthy children, and epidemiological studies show strong links between use of 2,4-D products and cancer." Pesticide Action Network Updates Service. 17 January 2006.

[Canada's Supreme Court supports pesticide ban](#) Janet Pelley. Environmental Science & Technology. 18 January 2006.

[Chemical health risks of conventionally produced foods](#) More than a dozen pesticides have been banned, restricted, or voluntarily withdrawn since 1996, when a new federal law required pesticides to meet safety standards for children, whose developing immune, central-nervous, and hormonal systems are especially vulnerable to damage from toxic chemicals. Consumer Reports. 6 January 2006.

[Demand for organic fruit, veggies on rise](#) Children eating non-organic foods were switched for five days to an organic diet and pesticide levels were measured in their urine before and after the change. The study -- published this past fall -- found that some pesticides disappeared from the children's urine after going organic. Lisa Stiffler. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Washington. 19 January 2006.

[Organic foods going mainstream](#) Kim Lyons. Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Pennsylvania. 27 January 2006.

[Differences can be found in benefits of organic food](#) Some organic foods that are worth paying for, according to Consumer Reports: Baby food, because exposure to toxins may pose greater risk to

children, and the condensed fruits and vegetables in baby food may concentrate pesticide residues. Michael Hastings. Winston-Salem Journal, North Carolina. 25 January 2006.

(d) Mercury

[A mercury primer](#) High mercury levels in humans can cause irreparable damage to the nervous system, brain and kidneys. The developing bodies of fetuses and babies are especially sensitive to the toxin Hugh Mcdiarmid Jr. Detroit Free Press, Michigan. 21 January 2006.

[Governor seeks 90% mercury reduction](#) Gov. Blagojevich is making a push to force Illinois' coal-fired power plants to dramatically curb mercury emissions within 3 years. If adopted, Illinois' rules would be among the toughest in the U.S. aimed at reducing the leading source of mercury, a toxic metal that can cause learning disabilities in children. Michael Hawthorne. Chicago Tribune, Illinois. 5 January 2006.

[Mercury Limits](#) Editorial. Detroit Free Press, Michigan. 9 January 2006.

[Illinois to Slash Mercury Emissions 90 Percent by 2009](#) Environment News Service. 7 January 2006.

[State plan to cut mercury assailed](#) Critics say Gov. Blagojevich's plan to cut mercury pollution from the state's coal-fired power plants would cost too much and provide few if any health benefits. Illinois advises pregnant women, children and women of childbearing age to limit eating fish caught in every lake, river and stream because of mercury. Michael Hawthorne. Chicago Tribune, Illinois. 6 January 2006.

[Tighter rules on mercury urged](#) Two starkly different plans are emerging for reducing mercury emissions from Virginia's coal-burning power plants. High levels of mercury, a toxic metal, can damage the brain and nervous system. The developing systems of fetuses and young children are most at risk. Rex Springston. Richmond Times-Dispatch, Virginia. 27 January 2006.

[Mercury matters](#) Concerns over mercury and emissions from coal-fired power plants in Idaho seem to cross not only party lines but also legislative committee borders these days. A neurotoxin, mercury is especially dangerous to children and pregnant women. Michelle Dunlop. Twin Falls Times-News, Idaho. 11 January 2006.

[EPA, clean up our air!](#) Although EPA knows cement kilns are a dangerous source of mercury, it continues to give the industry a pass when it comes to cleaning up this pollution. Mercury is most dangerous to women of childbearing age, young children, babies and fetuses. Exposure can damage the nervous system and possibly delay motor functions. Becky Bornhorst. Dallas Morning News. 24 January 2006.

[The Age of Autism: CDC probes vaccines](#) The CDC is continuing to investigate whether a mercury preservative in childhood immunizations has caused cases of autism -- despite the fact a report it paid for said such research should end. Dan Olmsted. United Press International. 7 January 2006.

[Missed shots stick with docs](#) Jean Peerenboom. Green Bay Press-Gazette, Wisconsin. 9 January 2006.

[Family sues over alleged MMR link to autism](#) A Scots family will launch a multi-million-pound lawsuit at the High Court in London today, claiming the MMR vaccine was responsible for causing autism in their child. Tanya Thompson. Edinburgh Scotsman, Scotland. 24 January 2006.

[Vaccine exemption outrages mercury foes](#) Reaction has been swift to a decision this month by the Illinois Department of Public Health to delay state lawmakers' attempts to reduce mercury exposure for those receiving flu shots. The Illinois bill would most noticeably affect infants and pregnant women getting a mercury-containing flu vaccine. Maggie Borman. [Alton Telegraph](#), Illinois. 24 January 2006.

[Mercury in fish: Casting caution to the wind?](#) A food industry lobbyist, a pediatrician and an investigator reporter have different perspectives on the health risks of mercury in fish. Virtually every fish in the world contain minute amounts of methyl mercury, a potent neurotoxin that can harm the developing nervous system of a young child or fetus. Bruce Gellerman. [Living On Earth](#). 14 January 2006.

[FDA tests show risk in tuna](#) Newly released data provide the best evidence to date that some cans of light tuna contain high levels of mercury. Testing by FDA found that 6% of canned light tuna samples contained large amounts of mercury, a toxic metal that can cause learning disabilities in children and neurological problems in adults. Sam Roe and Michael Hawthorne. [Chicago Tribune](#), Illinois. 27 January

[Popular Sushi Fish Loaded With Mercury](#) Revised data just released by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) shows that bigeye tuna, called ahi, is high in mercury. "The updated FDA data shows that the FDA should immediately revise its March 2004 mercury in seafood advisory to include ahi as a fish for women and children to avoid." [Environment News Service](#). 23 January 2006.

['Ahi mercury levels higher than thought, FDA says](#) Jan TenBruggencate. [Honolulu Advertiser](#), Hawaii. 24 January 2006.

[New restrictions on Ohio fish](#) The Ohio EPA has released new fish advisories. Fish advisories are most significant to women of child-bearing years, pregnant and nursing women and children under 15. Fish contaminated with mercury have been shown to cause neurological problems and impair development of young children. Bob Downing. [Akron Beacon Journal](#), Ohio. 10 January 2006.

[Mercury pollution advisory updated](#) Steve Bennish. [Dayton Daily News](#), Ohio. 26 January 2006.

(3) WATER AND SANITATION

[300 million Chinese drink unsafe water](#) About 300 million people living in China's vast countryside drink unsafe water tainted by chemicals and other contaminants, the government said Thursday in its latest acknowledgment of mounting risks from widespread pollution. About 90 percent of China's cities have polluted ground water. Associated Press. [Lahore Daily Times](#), Pakistan. 2 January 2006.

[Dirty water plagues Chinese](#) [Subscription required]. David Cyranoski. [Nature](#). 5 January 2006.

[New chemical spills threaten water supply for millions in China](#) Cindy Sui. [Agence France-Presse](#). 9 January 2005.

[China chemical spills spur plan to guard water supply](#) [Purchase Required]. Jim Yardley. [New York Times](#). 12 January 2006.

[China finds chemical plants pose widespread risk to rivers](#) [Registration Required]. Ching-Ching Ni. [Los Angeles Times](#), California. 25 January 2006.

[Effects of China's Songhua River Chemical Spill Still Emerging](#) 2 months after the Songhua River transboundary chemical spill, more study is needed to determine its environmental and human health effects. As the substances involved are carcinogenic, epidemiological studies on acute, short, medium and long-term impacts on human health should be conducted. [Environment News Service](#). 13 January

2006.

[Rotavirus drugs deemed safe and effective](#) Two new vaccines against rotavirus, the leading known cause of deaths from diarrhea among infants around the world, have proved safe and effective in two of the largest clinical trials in the history of medicine. The primary mode of transmission is fecal-oral. [Registration Required]. Donald G. Mcneil Jr. New York Times. 5 January 2006.

[Water: local action for global challenge](#) Currently about one and half billion people lack access to potable water and a greater percentage of this number is in the remote rural areas and urban slums. The average distance undertaken by African and Asian women and children to gain access to water is approximately six kilometres. Daniel Nana Aforo. Accra Graphic Ghana. 19 January 2006.

[Water scarcity increases woman's burden](#) Water is life. This a very common saying that people take for granted until there is no rain and all taps run dry. In urban as well as rural areas, it is the women and children who have to trek long distances in search of water. Holiday John. Dar es Salaam Guardian, Tanzania. 6 January 2006.

[Nepal achieving more success in water-borne disease](#) The workshop was organised to disseminate results on the assessment of EBD due to ambient air pollution, bacterial contamination of water supplies, disseminate the information about the health impacts of air and water pollution and share finding and experiences among the stakeholders. Rising Nepal. Gorkhapatra, Nepal. 10 January 2006.

[Safe water termed key indicator of uplift](#) Speakers at a seminar on water have pointed out that sustainable access to safe water is a key indicator of international development. A major purpose was to educate women and children about the basics of hygiene and sustainable maintenance and use of clean drinking water. APP. Dawn, Pakistan. 5 January 2006.

[Leukemia risk from chlorination seen mixed](#) Long-term exposure to the by-products of chlorination in drinking water appears to raise the risk of one type of leukemia -- chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) -- but decrease the risk of chronic lymphoid leukemia (CLL) and other types. American Journal of Epidemiology. Reuters Health. 16 January 2006.

[EPA lax in collecting water data](#) The U.S. EPA has been slow to force states to collect and report required data on lead levels in drinking water and has little information on schools and child-care facilities. [Registration Required]. David Nakamura. Washington Post. 26 January 2006.

[Arsenic limits for drinking water creating headaches](#) A new arsenic standard for community drinking water supplies is causing problems for hundreds of municipalities, schools, mobile home parks and businesses across Michigan. The chemical can cause health problems in children and the elderly, according to the EPA. Sally DeFreitas/Jeff Alexander Muskegon Chronicle, Michigan. 24 January 2006.

(4) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General

[Environment threatens children's health](#) Children today live in an environment vastly different from that of a few generations ago. Exposure to environmental risk factors during childhood may not only impact a child's health, but ill-health outcomes may appear in and persist throughout adulthood. Dr. Saleh Al-Habshi. Yemen Times. 5 January 2006.

[Our final goal must be to offer a global new deal](#) I will propose a post-Gleneagles agenda, founded on delivering the G8 commitments, for the empowerment of developing countries. It should, as a matter of urgency, include: a new environmental fund for developing countries, a delivery plan produced by

developing countries for achieving the MDGs. Gordon Brown. Guardian, London. 11 January 2006.

U.S.: Children will check industry on climate Executives can be trusted to voluntarily cut emissions, official says. "I believe that the people who run the private sector, who run these companies, they do have children, they do have grandchildren, they do live and breathe in the world." Associated Press. MSNBC. 11 January 2006.

Disasters of 2005 not completely 'natural,' UN health agency says 2005's high death toll can not necessarily be blamed on 'natural' disaster, according to WHO, but a mix of human and natural factors. One factor is environmental degradation, with natural events in Caribbean and Indian Ocean lands amplified due to deforestation and stripping of vegetation from coastlines. News Release. UN. 4 January 2006.

World Health Agency Says Disasters of 2005 Not Entirely Natural Environment News Service. 10 January 2006.

Governments must do more to reduce the impact of natural disasters – UN body The head of ISDR praised new strategies and laws to make disaster risk reduction a priority in several countries, but warned that with environmental degradation, global warming and other problems "the next natural hazard is just a matter of time." Press Release. United Nations. 18 January 2006.

UNICEF appeals for \$805m in aid UNICEF has launched an appeal to raise more than \$800m (£450m) to help women and children affected by humanitarian emergencies in 29 countries. In Sudan an estimated 17 million people are without access to safe water and more than 20 million are without safe sanitation BBC. 23 January 2006.

Deforestation boosts malaria rates New studies indicate that malaria risk is increased by tropical deforestation and also by mercury contamination from gold-mining reducing immune system defenses. Christopher Joyce. National Public Radio. 5 January 2006.

Relief groups need help treating children Researchers say international relief organizations need better guidelines for treating young children in emergency situations. The highest mortality rates following armed conflicts, natural disasters, population displacements or famines are often in children under 5. The most common causes of death are diarrhea, ARIs, measles, malaria and malnutrition. UPI. 3 January 2006.

The environmental dimension behind the avian flu pandemic The emergence of avian flu as a challenge to human health is clearly a reflection of major changes taking place in the environment. Avian flu is not the only one disease with an environmental health background - a startling number of similar vector-borne diseases have emerged in recent years. Press Release. UNEP. 18 January 2006.

World health: Gloomy state Health problems besetting the world today are enormous. Future problems seem beyond comprehension. Environmental changes, including global warming, make it easier for diseases to spread, including older diseases such as malaria, and newer maladies such as AIDS, West Nile virus and Lyme disease. Editorial. Charleston Gazette, West Virginia. 23 January 2006.

Measuring the unmeasurable The Environmental Performance Index is a compilation of data on the alleged state of the environment in 133 countries. WHO estimates more than 2 million people, mainly women and children, die from acute lower respiratory infections directly linked to burning dirty fuels in poorly flued fires. Oliver Marc. Washington Times. 30 January 2006.

[A hidden epidemic of birth defects](#) There's a hidden epidemic of birth defects running through the world's infants and children, striking about 8 million every year. The report does not calculate the hundreds of thousands of infants with birth defects caused by exposure during pregnancy to environmental toxins, alcohol, tobacco smoke and disease. Lee Bowman. Scripps Howard News Service. 31 January 2006.

[Scale, toll of gene birth defects vast, study finds](#) [Registration Required]. Thomas H. Maugh II. Los Angeles Times, California. 31 January 2006.

(b) Americas

[North American report on children's health and environment indicators a global first](#) CEC's report on [children's health and environment indicators in North America](#) finds that children remain at risk from environmental exposures and that children's health reporting must be improved to address the data gaps identified in the report. News release. Commission for Environmental Cooperation. 26 January 2006.

[First Report on North American Children Finds High Asthma Rates](#) The first report on children's health and environment indicators in North America by a NAFTA Commission shows a rising number of childhood asthma cases across the region, but improvements in children's blood lead levels, and a decrease in deaths from waterborne diseases. Environment News Service. 26 January 2006.

[Alertan por aumento de casos de asma en niños](#) Guillermina Guillén. El Universal, Mexico. 26 January 2006.

[National Children's Study: Looking Back at 2005, Looking Forward to 2006](#) 2005 marked a significant milestone in the life of the National Children's Study, most notably with the announcement of the first Centers that will launch and carry out the Study in seven communities across the country. E-Update. National Children's Study. 26 January 2006.

[Gutted EPA fails to protect kids](#) Tom Delay's "pay-to-play" lobbying system has resulted in the severe restriction in the ability of the EPA to protect our health and the environment. As an entomologist experienced in implementing pest management in schools, I find that our children are being exposed to pesticides unnecessarily. Marc Lame. Tucson Arizona Daily Star, Arizona. 25 January 2006.

[Living green, but allowing for shades of gray](#) Lunch with Wendy Gordon. She met Meryl Streep, a mother of 3 who wanted to fight widespread pesticide use. They formed Mothers and Others, a subgroup of the Natural Resources Defense Council dedicated to publicizing hazards that pesticides pose to children. [Purchase Required]. Claudia H. Deutsch. New York Times. 15 January 2006.

(c) Asia & Australia

[Environmental Hazards Jeopardize Pakistan Earthquake Survivors](#) Environmental hazards persist in the areas of northern Pakistan shaken by a severe earthquake. Clean water and sanitation are not available in many areas. There are fears of another wave of deaths from hypothermia, pneumonia and other respiratory infections - particularly among children. Environment News Service. 5 January 2006.

[Striving to make Calcutta malaria free](#) The proposed Target-0 project would bring health clinics to each ward and increase the overall number of malaria clinics. Calcutta saw a record-low number of malaria deaths in 2005. The civic body had launched an intense drive against mosquito-breeding grounds, which continued till the peak season of malaria. Deepankar Ganguly. Telegraph, Calcutta. 24 January 2006.

[Australia choking on bad air: report](#) Air pollution, poor water management, and a bleak sustainable energy future have bruised Australia's environmental credentials. Environmental health measures child mortality, drinking water safety, sanitation, and indoor air pollution. AAP. Ninemsn, Australia. 26 January 2006.

(d) Africa

[The main obstacle to the eradication of malaria lies within Africa](#) 3 million people a year die from the disease. Young children and pregnant mothers are the frontline victims. The mosquito net has become the key. The nets are being manufactured in a process that has the potential to be rolled out right across Africa. Jon Snow. The Guardian, London. 3 January 2006.

[Nobel laureate blames east Africa drought on deforestation](#) Kenyan Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai on Monday blamed the drought threatening millions in Kenya with famine on deforestation and urged immediate steps to replace lost trees. Agence France-Presse. 10 January 2006.

[Deforestation, Climate Change Magnify East African Drought](#) Environment News Service. 16 January 2006.

[Long-Term Development Key To Beating Chronic EAfrica Drought](#) Agence France-Presse. 9 January 2006.

[Drought-Stricken Kenyans Trek, Beg for Water](#) Nita Bhalla. Reuters. 13 January 2006.

[Drought forces Kenyan nomads to rethink traditions](#) Reuters. 16 January 2006.

[Hunger kills in Kenya's north as drought takes toll](#) Nita Bhalla. Reuters. 22 January 2006.

[Ghana Journalists Condemn Gold Mining Campaign Aimed at Children](#) Ghana Journalists are objecting to collaboration between the mining company and the newspaper "Junior Graphic" to make positive information about gold mining available to children. "Many people, especially vulnerable children, drank the water in the Asuopre River polluted by Newmont." Environment News Service. 23 January 2006.

(e) Middle East

[We need to stop polluting our homeland](#) Knesset members, local authorities and corporate managers are scrambling to be seen protecting deteriorating land reserves, water sources, and air quality. An average of 1,100 people die per year in the Dan region from complications due to air pollution, 1 Tel Aviv child in 5 suffers from breathing difficulties. Daniel Ben-Tal. Jerusalem Post, Israel. 3 January 2006.

[American Chronicle: Does One Good Deed Atone for all the Evils We Have Given Iraq?](#) What about the thousands of the Iraqi children that have been left with birth defects as a result of all the depleted uranium we have left for the poor Iraqi's to live with from now on? Earl J. Prignitz. uruknet.info. 10 January 2006.

(f) Europe/Russia

[Clean up launched at one of Czech Republic's most dangerous pollution blackspots](#) A special decontamination unit will start operation Tuesday at one of the Czech Republic's most notorious and dangerous pollution blackspots, the dioxin contaminated Spolana factory on the River Elbe. Agence France-Presse. 26 January 2006.

[Torpedo boat 'birth defect link'](#) Service aboard a Norwegian navy torpedo boat has been linked to an increased risk of having children with birth defects, a study says. Bergen University found those serving

in the 1990s on the boat used in electronic warfare had four times more risk of having children with defects. But the team were unable to identify the reason for the results. [BBC](#), UK. 17 January 2006.

[Russia cleaner than you think, study says](#) Russian air, water and sanitation systems are among the best in the world, according to a study. Russia's environmental health -- measured by indoor air pollution, the prevalence of smog outside, the quality of drinking water, child mortality and adequate sanitation -- is approaching its optimal level. Maria Levitov. [Moscow Times](#), Russia. 26 January 2006.
