

Don't allow the summer sun to leave bad memories!

Have you ever been sun burnt? Do you wear sun block routinely? Do you drink more water in the warmer months? Most people underestimate the consequences of sunburn and exposure to the sun – and assume that it does not have a lasting effect – even though it can be very detrimental to our health and appearance.

Overexposure to ultraviolet sunlight (UV rays) is the dominant factor in the development of skin cancer. By taking simple safety measures you can significantly decrease your risk of skin cancer, and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle that allows for proper exposure to the sun throughout the year.

It's always wise to choose more than one way to cover up when you're in the sun. Use sunscreen and put on a shirt... Seek shade and grab your sunglasses... Wear a hat, but use sunscreen too. Combining these protective actions helps protect your skin from the sun's damaging UV rays. And lastly, let's dispel the myth: sunbeds do NOT prepare your skin for a safe summer on the beach!!

Climate change, water supply and sanitation

How will climate change affect the supply of drinking water and sanitation? Could more floods and droughts jeopardize achievement of the Millennium Development Goals? What are the options for technological development to improve resilience to climate change impacts? What actions are needed now to ensure future policies, institutional capacities and technical capabilities decrease the impacts of climate change on water supply and sanitation? These questions are addressed in a new summary report (Vision 2030) that will be launched during World Water Week (16-22 August) in Stockholm, Sweden.

WHO country profiles: Update of national data on the effects of the environment on health

WHO estimates of the environmental burden of disease in its 193 Member States have recently been updated. The data highlight significant inequalities but also demonstrate – in every country – that people's health could be improved by reducing environmental risks. In developing countries, diseases most affected by the environment are diarrhoeal diseases, respiratory infections and unintentional injuries. In developed countries, healthier environments would significantly reduce the incidence of cancers, cardiovascular diseases and asthma. Estimating the environment-related burden of disease is one of several ways to monitor and evaluate health impacts and potential responses. Together with information on the costs, effectiveness and feasibility of interventions to create healthier environments, burden estimates help to meet the growing demand from policy-makers, donors and development agencies for evidence-based approaches to environmental health. The country profiles provide a preliminary estimate of health impacts of environmental threats. Countries can use these data to refine their own estimates and environment-related health policies.

International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (ICRIN)

A recent interagency coordination meeting reviewed progress made since the 2.5 million US dollar ICRIN project was launched in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine in April 2009. The project includes development of information and training materials to be disseminated in rural areas affected by the 1986 Chernobyl accident. Tailored packages on the health effects of radiation and promotion of healthy lifestyles will be disseminated to health workers, teachers, decision-makers, and mass media professionals.

The meeting was held 6-7 July 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland by UNDP, WHO, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and UNICEF.

Revamped climate change and human health web site

The updated WHO climate change and human health web site has been streamlined to provide a more efficient user interface, more interactivity and highlight the latest information as it becomes available. The site also includes a [photo and video multimedia gallery](#) featuring three new short video clips and two public service announcements. The new site provides a gateway to key global information on health and climate change and is currently available in English. It will be available in French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic in the coming months.

July 2009, Issue 12

Worldwide, 13 million deaths could be prevented every year by making our environments healthier.

WHO recommendation on pandemic Influenza A (H1N1) vaccines

The Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) recently held an extraordinary meeting in Geneva to make recommendations related to vaccines for the influenza A (H1N1) pandemic. The SAGE reviewed the current pandemic situation, the status of seasonal vaccine production and potential A(H1N1) vaccine production capacity, and considered potential options for vaccine use. The experts identified three different objectives that countries could adopt as part of their pandemic vaccination strategy:

- protect the integrity of the health-care system and critical national infrastructure;
- reduce morbidity and mortality; and
- reduce transmission of the pandemic virus within communities.

SAGE recommended that all countries should immunize their health workers as a first priority. Several other recommendations were provided by SAGE to WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan who endorsed the [recommendations](#) on 11 July. For the latest updates on H1N1 visit [here](#).

Upcoming events

16-22 August, [World Water Week, Stockholm, Sweden.](#)

Regular features

- Links to specific news and recent publications
- Links to our public health and environment regional offices

Facts and figures

Each year, about 1.5 million deaths are associated with the indoor combustion of solid fuels, mostly among women and children in developing countries. In the European Union (EU) alone, combustion, chemicals from building materials and dampness cause an annual loss of over 2 million years of healthy life due to premature death or to chronic diseases, such as asthma and cardiovascular diseases. In many EU countries, 20–30% of households have problems with dampness. Strong evidence indicates that this is a risk to health.

[Read the press release](#)

[Damp and mould: health risks, prevention and remedial actions](#) information brochure

BioDoseNet: Survey to determine technical capacities and needs

The technical capacities and needs in 60 participating laboratories of the global BioDoseNet network were recently surveyed. The laboratories specialized in assessing human exposure to radiation (biodosimetry) and the results will help ensure a more focused plan of activities and enhanced preparedness of WHO Member States for responses to radiation emergencies.

The survey results are being analyzed by participating laboratories in Canada and Ukraine.

WHO publishes first indoor air quality guidelines on dampness and mould

WHO indoor air quality guidelines on dampness and mould were recently published and are the result of a rigorous two-year review of currently available science by 36 leading experts worldwide. The authors conclude that occupants of damp or mouldy buildings – both private and public – have up to 75% increased risk of respiratory symptoms such as asthma. The guidelines recommend that damp- and mould-related problems can be prevented. When they do occur, they can also be treated to significantly reduce adverse health outcomes.

The guidelines recommend well-designed, well-constructed and well-maintained buildings, and for adequate housing and occupancy policies.

Selected health topics from WHO's public health and environment web sites:

[Climate change and human health](#)

[Quantifying environmental health impacts](#)

[Chemical safety](#)

[Ultraviolet radiation](#)

[Children's environmental health](#)

[Water, sanitation, health and hygiene](#)

[Click here for all WHO's environmental health topics](#)

Regional public health and environment links

WHO African Region: www.afro.who.int/des/phe/index.html

WHO South-East Asia Region: www.searo.who.int/en/Section23.htm

WHO Western Pacific Region: www.wpro.who.int/environmental_health/

WHO Region of the Americas: www.paho.org/Selection.asp?

WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region: www.emro.who.int/ceha/

WHO European Region: www.euro.who.int/envhealth

Links to new publications

[WHO guidelines for Indoor air quality, dampness and mould](#)

[Healthy hospitals, healthy planet, healthy people – Addressing climate change in health care settings](#)

Documentaries:

[Climate change is profoundly bad for health... as carbon goes up health goes down](#)

[Reducing green house gases emissions can be profoundly beneficial to health.... As carbon goes down health goes up](#)

[The health impacts of climate change are socially unjust](#)

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