



Initiative on Children's Environmental Health

[of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment](#)



Biweekly Bulletin December 16, 2009

This bulletin lists upcoming events plus recent announcements, news and journal articles, calls for proposals and other items related to children's environmental health. They are archived and searchable on our website:

http://www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/childrens_health/bulletins.

ICEH Highlights

New Resource: Climate Change and Children's Health

With several recent reports and statements regarding the impact of climate change on health, the Initiative on Children's Environmental Health is excited to provide a new resource page on Climate Change and Children's Health:

www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/childrens_health/climate This page lays out why children are especially vulnerable, what health impacts may be caused or exacerbated by climate change, and actions that we can take as individuals and as groups. A resources section also links to additional information. This new resource will be updated as new information becomes available.

Announcements

A daily news feed with articles and announcements is available on CHE's website:

<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/news/announce>.

[National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals.](#)

The blood and urine samples were collected from participants in CDC's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), which is an ongoing survey that samples the U.S. population every two years.

[See related articles: [New CDC survey tracks mercury levels in Americans](#) and [New frontiers -- and limitations -- in testing people's bodies for chemicals](#)]

[Loma Linda University inaugurates new Health Geoinformatics Lab.](#)

The Health Geoinformatics Laboratory center will provide undergraduate and graduate students with hands-on experience in applying modern information system technologies that combine maps and satellite imagery with data about the geographic locations of diseases, health care resources, and sociodemographic characteristics of communities.

[Health Department launches a web portal to track the city's environmental health conditions.](#)

New York City Health Department's new Environmental Public Health Tracking Portal provides continually updated information on everything from air quality and housing quality to pest levels and pesticide use.

[Call for comments: EPA to strengthen oversight of pesticide's impact on children and farmworkers.](#)

EPA's proposal would include a more thorough assessment of risks to workers, including farmworkers and farm children, as well as risks posed by pesticides that are not used on food. The agency is asking the public to comment on the new approach and how best to implement the improvements.

[EPA: Greenhouse gases threaten public health and the environment / Science overwhelmingly shows greenhouse gas concentrations at unprecedented levels](#)

[due to human activity.](#)

After a thorough examination of the scientific evidence and careful consideration of public comments, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced today that greenhouse gases (GHGs) threaten the public health and welfare of the American people.

[Call for comments: Primary national ambient air quality standard for sulfur dioxide.](#)

EPA proposes to establish a new 1-hour SO₂ standard within the range of 50 - 100 parts per billion (ppb), based on the 3-year average of the annual 99th percentile (or 4th highest) of 1-hour daily maximum concentrations.

[New online forum increases public's access to EPA.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has launched an online discussion forum designed to enhance communication between EPA and the public on contaminated sites, waste management, and recycling issues.

[Sick Schools 2009.](#)

"Sick Schools 2009 - America's Continuing Environmental Health Crisis for Children" offers peer-reviewed studies and compelling evidence of how polluted air inside and outside schools escalates health care costs, increases absenteeism, and reduces test scores.

[See a related article: [EPA detects brain-damaging toxic near school](#)]

[Summer Program in Environmental Health \(SUPEH\).](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Summer Program in Environmental Health (SUPEH) is a 10-week internship for students majoring in environmental health.

[EPA announces proposal to withdraw the Emission Comparable Fuels Rule.](#)

The ECF rule governs fuel that would otherwise be regulated as hazardous waste, but that generates emissions that are comparable to fuel oil.

[Job opening: Bethesda, Maryland.](#)

The Health and Environmental Funders Network (HEFN) is currently seeking a part-time administrative assistant to support its small office in a 16-hour-per-week hourly wage position.

Upcoming Events

Online Calendar. These and more upcoming events are listed in a searchable calendar: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/cgi-bin/searchevents.cgi>

1) EPA Public Hearing on Sulfur Dioxide

Tuesday January 5, 2010

10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Atlanta, Georgia

at the Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center, 61 Forsyth Street SW

Sponsor: US Environmental Protection Agency

Based on its review of the air quality criteria for oxides of sulfur and the primary national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) for oxides of sulfur as measured by sulfur dioxide (SO₂), EPA is proposing to revise the primary SO₂ NAAQS to provide requisite protection of public health with an adequate margin of safety. Comments will be limited to five minutes, but attendees can leave behind longer, written comments. Those who cannot attend the meeting can also submit written comments through [Regulations.gov](http://www.epa.gov/regulations).

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Tricia Crabtree, crabtree.tricia@epa.gov

2) CHE -Fertility Call: Disinfectants Overkill

Thursday January 14, 2010

10:00 a.m. Pacific / 1:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment Fertility and Reproductive Health Working Group

This call will highlight the recently released Women's Voices for the Earth report, [Disinfectants Overkill](#). Featured speakers include Erin Switalski, executive director of Women's Voices for the Earth; Alexandra Gorman Scranton, MS, director of Science and research for Women's Voices for the Earth; Patricia Hunt, PhD, Meyer Distinguished Professor at the School of Molecular Biosciences, Washington State University; and Ann Blake, PhD, Environmental & Public Health Consulting.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Julia Varshavsky, julia@healthandenvironment.org

3) IAQ Tools for Schools National Symposium

Thursday through Saturday, January 14 - 16, 2010

Washington, DC

at the Grand Hyatt Hotel

Sponsor: US Environmental Protection Agency

The EPA hosts its annual Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools (IAQ TfS) National Symposium to bring together past, present and future leaders in protecting and improving IAQ in our nation's schools. The IAQ TfS Program is a nationwide initiative to help school officials assess, resolve, and prevent IAQ problems, and to reduce exposure to asthma triggers in school facilities. While school officials, administrators, facilities and operations personnel, teachers, parents, and students traditionally attend, the Symposium is open to anyone with an interest in IAQ in schools.

Price: unknown

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: 703-842-5596

4) Thailand "Reverse Brain Drain Project": Conference on Cadmium in Food and Human Health

Friday through Sunday, January 15 - 17, 2010

Phitsanulok, Thailand

at the Topland Hotel, 68/33 Akathodsarod St. A.Muang

Sponsor: Reverse Brain Drain/National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), the Commission for Higher Education (CHE), Perkin Elmer, Bangkok Equipment and Chemical, Gibthai, Bio-Active

This conference is a step towards enhancement of research and research training in Thailand in the area of environmental health along with the sensor technological innovation for on-site use in monitoring of environmental pollution. TH-RBD-CCFH will cover three main themes: health effects, case studies, and management & risk minimization. It is designed to be inclusive and thus it will consider also other toxic metals of local concerns which may include lead and mercury. All interested individuals are encouraged to participate. Thai-to-English translation will also be made available to enhance information exchange on local environmental health issues.

Price: \$150

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: thrbd.ccfh@gmail.com

News and Journal Articles

[Sacramento protest targets farm chemical.](#)

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

The fight over a potent farm chemical [methyl iodide] is heating up as state regulators near a decision on approving its use in California. Fresno Bee, California.

[Nanomaterial used for cancer tests.](#)

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

Scientists have used nanosensors for the quick detection of cancers through blood tests, with nanomaterial also enabling the release of medicine at targeted organs, said studies released on Sunday. Agence France-Presse. [See a related article about safety concerns regarding nanomaterials: [Safety first](#)]

[CT scans linked to cancer.](#)

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

The risk of cancer associated with popular CT scans appears to be greater than previously believed, according to two new studies published Monday in the Archives of Internal Medicine. Wall Street Journal.

[UN left hundreds of Kosovo kids to die of lead poisoning.](#)

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

The youngsters are being poisoned by dust blowing into a stinking refugee camp from a mountain of toxic lead waste towering above them. London Sun, United Kingdom.

[See another story related to lead poisoning: [Study finds lead in 100% house paint in Nigeria](#)]

[Plasticizer may be tied to boys' breast enlargement.](#)

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

A recent report points to yet another possible harmful effect of exposure to phthalates -- a controversial plastics chemical used widely in the manufacture of consumer products. Reuters. [See a related journal article: [Prenatal di\(2-ethylhexyl\)phthalate exposure and length of gestation among an inner-city cohort](#)]

[Cancer risk to town unclear in report on asbestos effects.](#)

Sunday, December 13, 2009

A report shows that for the people of Thetford Mines, Que., living near an asbestos mine can be hazardous to health, but the jury is still out as to how much of a cancer risk the deadly mineral may be to residents. Toronto Globe and Mail, Ontario.

[Reclaiming health: Residents battle to overcome health inequities.](#)

Sunday, December 13, 2009

One-fifth of Sobrante Park's 2,800 residents live in poverty. It has far higher rates of asthma hospitalizations and diabetes, and deaths from cancer and heart disease, than more affluent East Bay neighborhoods. Contra Costa Times, California.

[See related articles: [Life may be shorter in poorer neighborhoods](#) and [In East Bay, where pollution goes, health problems follow](#)]

[Household toxins.](#)

Sunday, December 13, 2009

As it has long been suspected, toxins and carcinogenic chemicals lurk around the house and, particularly, in the kitchen where food for the family is stored and prepared. Manila Bulletin, Philippines.

[See a related article: [Choose non-toxic decor for a non-polluting apartment](#)]

[Oregon drops the ball on mercury.](#)

Sunday, December 13, 2009

Nearly every day, an eastern Oregon cement factory vents an invisible and toxic cloud of mercury into the skies above Durkee. Only one other factory in the country emits more mercury of the type most harmful to people. Portland Oregonian, Oregon.

[Child diabetes blamed on food sweetener.](#)

Sunday, December 13, 2009

Scientists have proved for the first time that a cheap form of sugar [fructose] used in thousands of food products and soft drinks can damage human metabolism and is fuelling the obesity crisis. London Times, United Kingdom.

[It's best to avoid BPA, federal official says.](#)

Saturday, December 12, 2009

The head of the primary federal agency studying the safety of bisphenol A said Friday that people should avoid ingesting the chemical - especially pregnant women, infants and children. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wisconsin.

[See related articles: [Getting to the bottom of plastic bottle risks](#), [Chemical BPA may harm developing fetus](#), [Quebec study suggests](#) and [Plastics Bisphenol A \(BPA\) component affects intestine](#)]

[Is dirty electricity making you sick?](#)

Friday, December 11, 2009

In addition to the stunning new investigations into dirty electricity (which we'll return to), several developments have highlighted the growing hazards of EMF pollution -- and the crucial need to address them. Prevention.

[See a related article: [Pollutants cluster under power lines](#)]

[Alcohol link to breast cancer recurrence.](#)

Friday, December 11, 2009

Women who have had breast cancer should stick to three alcoholic drinks or less a week to reduce the chance of the disease returning, researchers suggest. BBC.

[See related articles: [Soy doesn't harm, and may even help, breast cancer survivors, study finds](#) and [Lonely rats more prone to breast cancer](#)]

[Birth weight, early weight gain may hasten puberty.](#)

Friday, December 11, 2009

A relatively low birth weight and early-age weight gain may increase the likelihood of early puberty, hint findings from a German study. Earlier onset of puberty has been linked to certain cancers, high blood sugar and obesity. Reuters Health.

[EPA: No urgent concern over artificial field surfaces.](#)

Friday, December 11, 2009

The U.S. EPA said yesterday that there was no cause for immediate concern from lead and other toxins in artificial-turf fields and playground surfaces made from recycled tires. It cautioned, however, that the 123-page study was too small to rule out potential health threats. Philadelphia Inquirer, Pennsylvania.

[Tests link cancer to snarled freeway air.](#)

Wednesday, December 09, 2009

In as little as three months, the brains of laboratory rats begin to change after being exposed to the air around congested Southern California freeways. Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, California.

[Closer look finds chains test more often, impose stricter limits on bacteria.](#)

Wednesday, December 09, 2009

In the past three years, the government has provided the nation's schools with millions of pounds of beef and chicken that wouldn't meet the quality or safety standards of many fast-food restaurants, a USA TODAY investigation found. USA Today.

[See related articles: [Why a recall of tainted beef didn't include school lunches](#) and [Senator seeks 'strict testing' for meat sent to schools](#)]

[Pollution hotspots: Places we don't want to be.](#)

Tuesday, December 08, 2009

As world leaders prepare to head to Copenhagen for talks aimed at reaching a deal to slow the pace of climate change, people around the world are experiencing environmental destruction in myriad ways, some subtle, others devastating. Reuters.

[See a related article: [Oilsands pollution exceeds official estimates: study](#)]

[EPA unveils new policies on water at schools.](#)

Tuesday, December 08, 2009

The Environmental Protection Agency unveiled a new national strategy to enforce safe drinking water laws in small, rural communities on Tuesday and pledged to redouble efforts to protect children from toxic water in schools. Houston Chronicle, Texas.

[See related articles: [EPA plan for improving schools' drinking water gets chilly reception at Senate hearing](#), [Millions in U.S. drinking dirty water, records show](#), [Rules to ensure safer water not on tap yet](#), [L.A. water ranks 83rd in nation](#) and [Gender-bending chemicals in Minnesota waters](#)]

[The unusual suspects.](#)

Tuesday, December 08, 2009

As food production and preparation moves farther afield, tainted items become hard to avoid. Washington Post.

[Group to start project to cut indoor fuel burning.](#)

Monday, December 07, 2009

An advocacy group on lung health plans to work with health authorities in 12 countries from 2010 to reduce indoor fuel burning, which causes respiratory diseases and lung cancer and kills 2 million people a year. Reuters.

[See a related article: [Higher lung cancer risk in eastern China: study](#)]

[White House urged to help states with nuclear plants stockpile thyroid drug.](#)

Monday, December 07, 2009

Citing lessons from Hurricane Katrina, advocates are seeking to reverse a Bush-era policy and increase advance distribution of potassium iodide to protect people near nuclear power plants in the event of an accident or an attack. New York Times.

[Accidental release of toxic chemicals, polluted water by local plants cited in report.](#)

Monday, December 07, 2009

Frequent accidents at 10 of the state's biggest refineries resulted in the release of millions of pounds of toxic chemicals into the air and millions of gallons of polluted water between 2005 and 2008, a new report finds. New Orleans Times-Picayune, Louisiana.

[Stain repellents linked to low birth weight and premature births.](#)

Monday, December 07, 2009

Research finds that stain repellent and anti-adhesive chemicals may be linked to low birth weight and premature births in those born near a factory that both produces and uses the chemicals. Environmental Health News.

[New bleach alternative safe for kids.](#)

Monday, December 07, 2009

The product's active ingredient -- trichloromelamine -- was invented in the 1940s by the military as a mess kit and fruit and vegetable treatment for soldiers. It is a different form of chlorine than the chlorine in bleach and kills contaminants quickly. Des Moines Register, Iowa.

[Patients deficient in vitamin D fare worse in battle with lymphoma.](#)

Sunday, December 06, 2009

A new study adds lymphoma to the list of malignancies suspected of being more difficult to control in patients with vitamin D deficiency common in parts of the U.S. population. Science News.

[U of I team fears PCBs may remain cause for concern.](#)

Sunday, December 06, 2009

PCBs, the toxic chemicals banned in the 1970s, are back. Actually, they never went away. Now, researchers have reason to believe that PCBs are continuing to accumulate in Lake Michigan, and probably elsewhere. They are trying to figure out how big of a problem that is and what can be done. Des Moines Register, Iowa.

[See a related article: [St. Clair Shores residents battle PCB contamination](#)]

[A whole new look at dietary benefits of fish.](#)

Sunday, December 06, 2009

New research indicates levels of selenium, more so than mercury, are key to whether seafood may be beneficial or harmful. But some scientists have questioned the findings and no changes to state and federal health advisories are planned. Fort Myers News-Press, Florida.

[See related articles: [Selenium, omega-3s may stave off colorectal cancer](#) and [Fishing for facts](#)]

[Study shows San Antonio's power plants have little effect on public health.](#)

Saturday, December 05, 2009

An independent study conducted by the University of Texas School of Public Health San Antonio showed that CPS Energy's natural gas-fired and coal-fired power plant have minimal impact on the health of Bexar County residents. San Antonio Business Journal, Texas.

[See a related article: [Utah Supreme Court rules against coal power plant](#)]

[WHO launches campaign to halt smoking in Africa.](#)

Saturday, December 05, 2009

The World Health Organisation launched a campaign on Friday to try to stop what could become a health catastrophe caused by rapidly rising levels of smoking in Africa. Reuters Health.

[Correlations between gene expression and mercury levels in blood of boys with and without autism.](#)

Saturday, December 05, 2009

Autistic and typically developing children display different correlations between transcript levels and low levels of mercury and lead. Neurotoxicity Research.

[See a related article: [Correlations of gene expression with blood lead levels in children with autism compared to typically developing controls](#)]

[How Europe's discarded computers are poisoning Africa's kids.](#)

Saturday, December 05, 2009

People in the West throw away millions of old computers every year. Hundreds of thousands of them end up in Africa, where children try to eke out a living by selling the scrap. But the toxic elements in the waste are slowly poisoning them. Der Spiegel.

[Cancer cells? Brain tumor numbers steady despite increased mobile phone use.](#)

Friday, December 04, 2009

A new report has found no increase in the incidence of brain tumors in four European countries since mobile phones became widespread, but some in the research community still think the devices may prove harmful in the long run. Scientific American.

[See a related article: [Growing evidence that cell phones create tumors](#)]

[Black lung plan may not lower dust limits.](#)

Friday, December 04, 2009

The Obama administration on Thursday kicked off a campaign to "end black lung," but said it may not follow through on a proposal to tighten the legal limits on coal dust that causes the deadly disease. Charleston Gazette, West Virginia.

[Birth defects rise from lack of tests.](#)

Friday, December 04, 2009

Experts say a lack of pre-marital physical checks and pollution have pushed the number of Beijing babies with birth defects to 1.6 percent this year, twice as many as 10 years ago. Air pollution causes a higher rate of birth defects in the city than in the countryside, health officials said. China Daily.

[See a related article about air pollution's effects on children in India: [Children facing brunt of air pollution](#)]

[Agent Orange's lethal legacy: For U.S., a record of neglect.](#)

Friday, December 04, 2009

In the 30 years since Agent Orange was recognized publicly as a potential health threat,

the federal government has established a record of neglect, even as the health fallout has spread, a Tribune investigation finds. Chicago Tribune, Illinois.

[See related articles: [Agent Orange: Congenital deformities plague Vietnam: US slow to help](#); [Agent Orange's lethal legacy: At former U.S. bases in Vietnam, a potent poison is clear and present danger](#); [Iraq/Afghanistan deployment tied to respiratory woes, Military: Burn pits caused illnesses and Navy will pay to restudy Lejeune water](#)]

[Out of plumb: When water treatment causes lead contamination.](#)

Thursday, December 03, 2009

In recent years contamination with lead has emerged as an unintended consequence of water treatment changes aimed at improving water quality. Environmental Health Perspectives.

[Expert panel recommends listing formaldehyde as known human carcinogen.](#)

Thursday, December 03, 2009

On November 4, a 10-member independent scientific expert panel convened by the National Toxicology Program (NTP) voted unanimously to list formaldehyde as a "known human carcinogen" in the upcoming 12th NTP Report on Carcinogens (RoC). Environmental Factor.

[Momentum builds for meaningful TSCA reform.](#)

Thursday, December 03, 2009

Two developments on Dec. 2 have encouraged backers of EPA's planned rewrite of the Toxic Substances Control Act that a meaningful reform is possible for the law, which is the key statute allowing the government to regulate industrial chemicals because of health risks they pose to the public. Occupational Health & Safety.

[See a related article: [States: Federal toxics laws too weak](#)]

[Toxic chemicals found in a third of children's toys: study.](#)

Thursday, December 03, 2009

A third of the most popular children's toys in the United States this year contain harmful chemicals including lead, cadmium, arsenic and mercury, a US consumer group said Wednesday. Agence France-Presse.

[See a related article: [Safety isn't guaranteed in Toyland](#)]

[Heavy metals raise risk of penis defects.](#)

Thursday, December 03, 2009

Pregnant women who work in occupations that may bring them into contact with heavy metals are at more than double the usual risk of having a baby boy with hypospadias. Sydney Morning Herald, Australia.

[Chemicals in waterways untracked, unchecked.](#)

Wednesday, December 02, 2009

Growing awareness of pharmaceuticals in Iowa waterways has eclipsed a broader problem of chemicals from consumer products that are untracked and unchecked, a new report said. Mason City Globe Gazette, Iowa.

[See a related article: [Health Department designated as medications disposal site](#)]

[PennEnvironment: New report presents policy to tackle environmental health threats of Marcellus Shale drilling.](#)

Wednesday, December 02, 2009

In the face of ongoing environmental damage and public health threats posed by Marcellus Shale drilling, a statewide environmental advocacy group released a new policy blueprint Tuesday. Gant Daily, Pennsylvania.

[Mouthwash multiplies risk of cancer up to nine times.](#)

Wednesday, December 02, 2009

Dental researchers warned yesterday that among people using mouthwashes containing alcohol, the risk of oral cancer was increased nine times if they smoked, and five times if they drank alcohol. Sydney Australian, Australia.

[Healthy, organic and cheap school lunches?](#)

Wednesday, December 02, 2009

For the first time, a small, privately held start-up is pushing to produce what are by all accounts fresh, healthful, all-natural school meals for just under \$3 apiece. USA Today.

Most of the news articles above come from [Environmental Health News](#).

The Collaborative on Health and the Environment offers this information as a service but does not endorse any of the events, articles or announcements.

Companion bulletins are available for different audiences:

- For those interested in environmental health as it relates to learning and developmental disabilities: <http://www.iceh.org/LDDIbulletins.html>
- For those interested in environmental health in Washington State and the Pacific Northwest: <http://washington.chenw.org/bulletins.html>

While there is overlap with this bulletin, there are some events and announcements unique to those bulletins.

If you would like to join the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE) and the ICEH Working Group, please complete the application on the CHE website: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/application> Joining CHE means receiving up to four email messages a month from the CHE National listserv. CHE costs nothing to join and the benefit is shared information and opportunities for further engagement, if you choose. Be sure to mark that you want to join the Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Working Group at the bottom of the application.

Nancy Snow
Collaborative on Health and the Environment

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