



Initiative on Children's Environmental Health

[of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment](http://www.healthandenvironment.org)



Biweekly Bulletin March 9, 2011

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.

in ICEH Highlights

Practice Prevention Column Updates

Recent updates to CHE's Practice Prevention columns will bring new information to parents, caregivers, advocates and others concerned about children's health:

- The **Mold column** was updated and published in February. The new column provides information on the health risks of mold and how to prevent exposures.
- The **Baby Care Products column** and the **Lindane column** have been translated into Spanish. More translations will be coming in the next few weeks, thanks to CHE's intern Kelly Quinn.

These columns are available, along with all ICEH's other columns and fact sheets, on the [ICEH website](http://www.healthandenvironment.org).

Announcements

A daily news feed with articles and announcements is available on CHE's website:
<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/news/announce>.

[EPA approves California's efforts to become nation's first PERC-free dry cleaning state.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has approved California's regulations banning the use of the toxic air contaminant perchloroethylene (PERC) from the state's dry cleaning operations by 2023.

[EPA updates database on health and environmental impacts of electricity generation.](#)

eGRID is a comprehensive database of emissions from almost all electric power generated in the United States. The data are widely used to show the impacts of electricity generation as well as the benefits from reduced electricity demand.

[EPA requests extension on Clean Water Act permit requirement for pesticide discharges.](#)

EPA is requesting that the deadline be extended from April 9, 2011 to October 31, 2011. During the period while the court is considering the extension request, permits for pesticide applications will not be required under the Clean Water Act.

[Call for papers: Incorporating Environmental Health in Clinical Medicine.](#)

The Journal of Environmental and Public Health has issued a call for papers for a special issue. The main focus of this special issue will be the translation of emerging scientific knowledge in environmental health sciences into practical and useful information for

clinical medicine as well as public health policy. The disciplines of scientific research, clinical practice, and public policy need to be integrated and to support each other in this important field of science.

[EPA submits for public comment the next round of Safe Drinking Water Act contaminant monitoring.](#)

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing 30 currently unregulated contaminants for monitoring in water systems, and submitting this proposal for public comment.

[Health department launches new website to track environmental health information.](#)

The Department of Health today launched a new website for the Pennsylvania Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, or PA EPHTN, allowing the public to track health challenges and environmental-related diseases such as asthma.

[Call for comments: Proposed action on National Ambient Air Quality Standards for CO.](#)

The Proposed Rule for National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Carbon Monoxide is available online and open for comments. Comments must be received on or before April 12, 2011.

[Largest oil spill health study to launch along Gulf Coast.](#)

The GuLF STUDY (Gulf Long-term Follow-up Study), to help learn if oil spills and exposure to crude oil and dispersants affect physical and mental health, will launch in states along the Gulf Coast in February 2011.

[See a related article: [Gulf restoration task force says plan will address both BP oil spill effects and existing environmental problems](#)]

[Forum to address threats to water supplies in Delaware basin: Connecting four states for drinking water protection.](#)

Threats to sources of drinking water and public health for more than 15 million people in Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and New York will be the focus of a high-level forum in Philadelphia and five satellite locations on March 10.

[Call for proposals: Environmental Education grants available.](#)

May 2, EPA Regions will accept proposals from eligible applicant schools and entities for the Agency's 2011 Environmental Education grants to develop new programs promoting environmental stewardship.

[Call for proposals: Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.](#)

The RFA requests applications for projects in these categories: 1) toxic substances and areas of concern; 2) invasive species; 3) nearshore health and nonpoint source pollution; and 4) accountability, education, monitoring, evaluation, communication, and partnerships. Two webinars will be held on March 9th and 17th.

Upcoming Events

Online Calendar. These and more upcoming events, including requests for proposals and abstracts, are listed in a searchable calendar:

<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/cgi-bin/searchevents.cgi>

1) Healthy Aging Starts at Conception: Promoting Health Across the Lifespan

Friday March 11, 2011

11:00 a.m. Pacific / 2:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

Beginning in the womb and continuing throughout life, environmental factors are strong

determinants of throughout the lifespan. Reproductive, children's, midlife and elder health are inherently interconnected. In addition, various features of our biological, social and natural environments, alone and in combination, can affect health at any time in the life continuum. These stressors can also accumulate and influence genetic expression, and even the health of future generations. A century of change in our food, built, chemical, natural, psychosocial, and socioeconomic environments is fueling dramatic increases in diseases and disabilities throughout the lifespan, such as diabetes, obesity, cancer, reproductive health and developmental disabilities. Combined with a near doubling of the over-65 population in the new few decades, this trajectory threatens to overwhelm our health care system and our social resources, and bring economic and social instability. This call will discuss how we can advance a more positive path if we understand and address the interrelationships of health and the environment throughout life, and explore commonsense and also innovative approaches that may prevent chronic disease, foster health and sustain local and global economies. We will also address the importance of interventions that address the structural, systemic origins of many diseases that can be designed to benefit ecosystems more generally, thereby linking human health to planetary health.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: CHE, info@healthandenvironment.org

2) Public Health Nursing Conference 2011

Friday through Sunday, March 11 - 13, 2011

Kuching, Sarawak Malaysia

at the Borneo Convention Centre

Sponsor: Sarawak Health Department, Ministry of Health Malaysia, Faculty of Medicine and Health Science UNIMAS, Persatuan Jururawat Masyarakat Sarawak and iSystem College

The theme is "Enhancing community participation: Partnership in health promotion." The traditional role of the public health nurses was confined to "nursing" the mothers and their children. They have done well in that role. Over time they have gone beyond that. Now they are doing more health promotion and targeting a wider audience. The theme of this conference aptly describes the major component of the role and responsibilities of public health nurses now. There isn't a better time to talk about "health promotion" and "community participation" than at this conference. The promotion of health in the community is a process to achieve health, which is a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of diseases. With the rapid rise in health care costs, it has become imperative that we find effective and affordable ways to prevent disease and promote health.

Price: see the [Registration page](#)

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: see the [Contact page](#)

3) Atmospheric Toxics Webinar Series

Tuesday March 15, 2011

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Great Lakes Commission

Over the last six years, the Great Lakes Commission (GLC), under funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and in cooperation with the eight Great Lakes states, has awarded research grants dealing with atmospheric toxic pollutants affecting the Great Lakes and their tributary watersheds. Thirty-five research grants have been awarded since 2004 addressing a diverse array of research concerning atmospheric pollutant loadings and movement within the basin and the associated impacts of numerous persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic (PBT) chemicals on wildlife and human

health. A substantial amount of new scientific knowledge has been attained through these research activities. The GLAD webinar series is intended to provide a forum for GLAD Principal Investigators (PIs) to disseminate information on their respective research activities, including specific findings, recommended follow-up actions, and potential public policy actions to foster elimination of PBT threats to the region. The presenters and topics will be listed on the website.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: GLC, 734-971-9135

4) Advancing the Green Economy: Achieving Impact from the Office to the Ecosystem

Thursday March 17, 2011

6:30 p.m.

Berkeley, California

at the UC Berkeley Extension, 1995 University Avenue, Room 202

Sponsor: UC Berkeley Extension

Join scientist and sustainability expert Jonathan L. Gelbard, PhD, as he explores the connections between choices made in the office and the health of ecosystems and people. Hear stories about how businesses are learning to boost profits and productivity by using and selling green products. Gain valuable tips on how to identify the products, partners, and certifications that can help your company achieve measurable positive impacts and advance the green economy.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

5) Mercury Effects on Human Health

Tuesday March 29, 2011

8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Seattle, Washington

at the Holiday Inn

Sponsor: EOS Alliance

Both organic and elemental mercury create a wide spectrum of human health concerns. Mercury spills cost public and private entities millions of dollars a year in cleanup and health care costs. This series of courses addresses concerns mercury causes by providing participants with a foundation in the science of environmental mercury and presents solutions for mitigating the impacts of this ubiquitous contaminant.

Price: \$275 or \$225 for employees of Native American tribes, government agencies, nonprofits, students, and NAEP, NEBC, NWAEP members

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Northwest Environmental Training Center, 425-270-3274

6) Atmospheric Toxics Webinar Series

Thursday March 31, 2011

10:00 a.m. - noon Eastern time

Sponsor: Great Lakes Commission

Over the last six years, the Great Lakes Commission (GLC), under funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and in cooperation with the eight Great Lakes states, has awarded research grants dealing with atmospheric toxic pollutants affecting the Great Lakes and their tributary watersheds. Thirty-five research grants have been awarded since 2004 addressing a diverse array of research concerning atmospheric

pollutant loadings and movement within the basin and the associated impacts of numerous persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic (PBT) chemicals on wildlife and human health. A substantial amount of new scientific knowledge has been attained through these research activities. The GLAD webinar series is intended to provide a forum for GLAD Principal Investigators (PIs) to disseminate information on their respective research activities, including specific findings, recommended follow-up actions, and potential public policy actions to foster elimination of PBT threats to the region. The presenters and topics will be listed on the website.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: GLC, 734-971-9135

7) National Environmental Justice Advisory Council National Public Teleconference Meeting

Thursday March 31, 2011

1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: National Environmental Justice Advisory Council

The discussion topic will be how to best ensure long-term engagement of communities in Gulf Coast restoration efforts. A public comment period will begin promptly at 2:30 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Price: free, but advance registration is required

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: NEJAC, March2011NEJACMeeting@AlwaysPursuingExcellence.com

8) Rx for Survival: Social Justice and Medical Advocacy

Friday through Sunday, April 8 - 10, 2011

Washington, DC

at George Washington University

Sponsor: Physicians for Social Responsibility's student-led division, SPSR

Rx for Survival 2011 seeks to create a unique forum that promotes social responsibility and smart policy from the medical perspective. It seeks to encourage participants to look beyond the traditional realms of their medical or public health professional careers by becoming change makers in both the medical and policy world.

Price: \$30 for students or \$90 for health professionals and the general public

[Visit the website](#)

News and Journal Articles

[E-waste multiplies, recycle option absent.](#)

Monday, March 07, 2011

Calcutta is generating much more electronic waste than a few years back and very little of it is being recycled, increasing the risk of an environment disaster. Calcutta Telegraph, India.

[Study confirms lower air pollution levels boost health and financial benefits.](#)

Monday, March 07, 2011

If we cut levels of air pollution in cities across Europe, we could boost our health and financial benefits, new research shows. Balkans.com Business News.

[See other articles about air quality: [Aging U.S. oil refineries put Americans at risk](#); [EPA sets pollution controls for boilers, incinerators](#); [Air pollution may hurt school kids' lungs](#); [Government launches transition to low-sulphur diesel](#); [Dirty air triggers more heart attacks than cocaine](#); [Report: Low health risks in Sublette County air](#); [New ozone standards won't affect southwest Alabama's federal funding, say officials](#); [Ind. activists say wood boiler rules too weak](#); [EPA report underscores Clean Air Act's successful public](#)

[health protections](#); [Geographical information systems and environmental epidemiology: a cross-sectional spatial analysis of the effects of traffic-related air pollution on population respiratory health](#); [Mongolia: Ulaanbaatar air pollution linked to public health crisis](#); [EPA releases new standards on toxic industrial emissions](#); [Port of LA battling pollution](#); [Air pollution could reduce life by almost two years](#); [Wood stove smoke in Tacoma area has more health risks, study says](#); [Impacts of highway traffic exhaust in alpine valleys on the respiratory health in adults: a cross-sectional study](#); [Utah freeways choking asthmatic kids?](#); [Hold your breath: Air pollution plays role in cardiac, metabolic diseases](#); [California to monitor air for pesticide content](#) and [EPA funds air pollution research centers](#)]

Endocrine disruptors: From endocrine to metabolic disruption.

Sunday, March 06, 2011

Even though the intended uses of pesticides, plasticizers, antimicrobials, and flame retardants are beneficial, effects on human health are a global concern. Annual Review of Physiology.

[See other articles about general environmental impacts: [Cancer rise and sperm quality fall 'due to chemicals'](#); [Offsetting the environment's impact on our children's health](#); [Concern grows over use of flame retardant HBCD](#) and [Mind games](#)]

Eco-friendly renovations can trigger asbestos, lead poisoning: study.

Sunday, March 06, 2011

Canadians making eco-friendly renovations to their homes could be putting their children's health at serious risk, say researchers. Edmonton Journal, Alberta.

[See another article about lead hazards in homes: [Baltimore goes from lead paint cleanup leader to 'in the red'](#)]

The Rx for healthy kids.

Saturday, March 05, 2011

Dr. Charles Owyang, a pediatrician in the San Francisco Bay Area, is training other physicians in writing prescriptions for nature as part of the National Environmental Education Foundation's Children & Nature Initiative. Living On Earth.

Plastic's new frontier: no scary chemicals.

Friday, March 04, 2011

Some businessmen and scientists in Austin, Texas, are trying to change the way consumers think about plastic. They say it's not enough to buy a water bottle or sandwich bag that's free of BPA, because these BPA-free products still have high levels of estrogenic activity. Morning Edition, NPR.

[See a related article: [BPA-free containers release BPA-like chemicals, study says](#)]

Study: Americans have twice as much BPA as Canadians.

Friday, March 04, 2011

Americans have twice as much of the estrogen-like chemical BPA in their bodies as do Canadians, but the reasons for the disparity remain a mystery, a new study concludes. USA Today.

[See other articles about BPA: [Are receipts bad for your health?](#); [Maine and BPA: a brief history](#) and [China to ban plastic bottles to feed babies](#)]

Low sperm counts linked to fetal effects.

Friday, March 04, 2011

Scientists report a correlation between a man's ability to father children and the distance between his genitals and anus -- a measurement also associated with elevated concentrations of chemicals known as phthalates in urine collected from the boys' mothers during prenatal visits. Science News. [See other articles about prenatal exposures: [Not just for workers: Maternal exposure to ambient benzene linked to spina bifida in infants](#) and [Female mice disabled by parents' pesticide intake](#)]

Diabetes increases risk for mortality from all causes.

Thursday, March 03, 2011

Diabetes is associated with an increased risk for premature death from not only vascular

diseases but also several cancers, infectious diseases, degenerative disorders and intention self harm, researchers found. Endocrine Today.

[See related articles: [Obesity: 'Like the new smoking'](#); [A new prime suspect behind the global upsurge in obesity and diabetes: the womb](#) and [New insights into fitness versus fatness and diabetes risk](#)]

Ibuprofen may lower risk of Parkinson's disease.

Thursday, March 03, 2011

For the study, which followed more than 130,000 people for six years, those who reported using ibuprofen at least twice weekly had a more than one-third reduction in the risk of getting Parkinson's disease compared to those who didn't take the pain reliever as often. WebMD.

[See another article about a pharmaceutical: [New birth defect warning for Topamax](#)]

Podcast: Benchmarks of toxicology.

Wednesday, March 02, 2011

In this podcast Peter Goering tells host Ashley Ahearn how he and other members of the evaluation group chose from centuries' worth of accomplishments to select the people and events that best illustrate the promise and achievements of toxicology.

Top House Democrats launch investigation into 'fracking' on public lands.

Tuesday, March 01, 2011

Two top House Democrats launched an investigation Monday into the potential health risks of drilling for natural gas on public lands. Washington Hill, District of Columbia.

[See a related announcement: [School of Public Health releases report on impact of natural gas drilling](#) and news articles: [NTN calls for fracking ban](#); [Garfield County grapples with gas drilling health impacts as NYT series probes EPA](#); [Fracking: The great shale gas rush](#); [Officials monitor fracking water](#); [Deep in the heart of the gas drilling controversy: What have Texans learned?](#); [Report warns western Colorado gas drilling could sicken neighbors](#) and [Environmental watchdog outlines fracking risks](#)]

Philadelphia tops list of U.S. most toxic cities.

Tuesday, March 01, 2011

Philadelphia, Bakersfield and Fresno, California, are the most toxic cities in America, according to a new study that looked at air and water quality in metropolitan areas. Reuters.

Breast cancer rates have stopped falling: study.

Tuesday, March 01, 2011

Breast cancer rates among U.S. white women have stopped falling, U.S. researchers said on Monday, suggesting that the fallout from a 2002 study linking hormone replacement therapy to breast cancer was short lived. Reuters.

[See other articles about cancer risk: [Being too fat raises risk of deadly breast cancer: study](#); [Passive smoking 'raises breast cancer risk'](#); [Women who smoke at ANY stage of their lives 'are more likely to get breast cancer'](#) and [Paper explores the occurrence of mesothelioma among drywall workers](#)]

Smoking early in pregnancy raises risk of heart defects in infants.

Monday, February 28, 2011

Maternal cigarette smoking in the first trimester was associated with a 20 to 70 percent greater likelihood that a baby would be born with certain types of congenital heart defects, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[See other articles about tobacco products: [Dissolvable tobacco products show what they're made of](#); [Lorillard, R.J. Reynolds sue FDA](#); [Deaths rise with smoke](#); [FDA panel findings could lead to curbs on menthol cigarettes](#); [Rising status of women linked to more smoking](#); [Utah parents light up, kids with asthma head to the ER](#); [Third hand smoke -- myth or reality?](#); [City's smoking ban to go into effect Tuesday ... and many are OK with ordinance](#); [Secondhand smoke tied to higher birth defect risk](#) and [Lung cancer rates double in women over 60 since 1970s](#)]

[Low vitamin D levels linked to allergies in kids.](#)

Saturday, February 26, 2011

A study of more than 3,000 children shows that low vitamin D levels are associated with increased likelihood that children will develop allergies. ScienceDaily.

[Wal-Mart bypasses federal regulators to ban controversial flame retardant.](#)

Saturday, February 26, 2011

In perhaps the boldest example yet of "retail regulation," Wal-Mart is stepping ahead of federal regulators and using its muscle as the world's largest retailer to move away from PBDEs, a class of chemicals researchers say endangers human health and the environment. Washington Post.

[See other articles about regulation of toxics: [Sen. Jehlen, Rep. Lewis co-sponsor toxic chemicals bill](#); [Toxic or not?](#); [Doctors urge indoor tanning ban for minors](#); [Senator seeks limits on chemical in plastic](#); [Senate passes two health-care worker safety bills prompted by InvestigateWest reporting](#) and [EPA under fire in U.S. by Republicans](#)]

[Environment agency moves to regulate carbon dioxide.](#)

Friday, February 25, 2011

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has begun the initial stages of a process that may lead to the federal agency's first regulations to limit emissions of carbon dioxide from power plants and oil refineries. Inter Press Service.

[See other articles related to health effects of climate change: [Warming threatens public health, groups warn](#) and [Canadian allergy season getting longer](#)]

[Government experts urging Britons to eat less red meat.](#)

Friday, February 25, 2011

Government advisers will publish a report tomorrow recommending people limit their consumption of red meat, which contains substances that have been linked to bowel cancer. Press Association.

[See another article about diet and health: [Maternal fructose intake impacts female and male fetuses differently](#)]

[Arkansas Senate OKs fluoridation for cities.](#)

Friday, February 25, 2011

The Arkansas Senate voted Thursday to require Arkansas cities with more than 5,000 residents to put fluoride in their water, rejecting a lawmaker's complaint that it would burden some rural water systems. CNBC.

[New report: Agencies differ on environmental health impacts of coal ash in Fairbanks.](#)

Thursday, February 24, 2011

Coal ash is black and dirty. It sticks to your shoes and your fingers and leaves black streaks in its tracks. But is it hazardous? Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Alaska.

[See another article about coal ash: [Coal ash plan raises fears in Missouri community](#)]

[Medical students find lead in some locally sold ceramics.](#)

Thursday, February 24, 2011

Emergency-room doctor Gerald F. O'Malley and a team of medical students found that 25 percent of the ceramic items from Chinatown shops contained lead, as did 10 percent of Chinese-made products bought elsewhere. Philadelphia Inquirer, Pennsylvania.

[See other articles about hazards in consumer products: [Chinese drywall could pose health risks](#); [Two leading bounce house makers agree to strict lead limits](#); [FDA defends actions at plant that made tainted wipes](#); [Go green for a healthier home](#); [Cadmium in kids jewelry poses poison risk](#) and [Cadmium in children's jewelry: 100 times recommended maximum exposure if mouthed or swallowed](#)]

[Greater germ exposure cuts asthma risk.](#)

Thursday, February 24, 2011

Children living on farms have a lower risk of asthma than children who don't because they are surrounded by a greater variety of germs, according to two large-scale studies

published Wednesday. The key appears to be exposure to a diversity of bugs, not just more of them. Wall Street Journal.

[See other articles about asthma: [Program aimed at reducing asthma risks for Long Beach residents](#) and [La. study to look at roach control, asthma links](#)]

Agent Orange hotline set up.

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

In the aftermath of revelations that human markers were employed by timber companies conducting aerial spraying of defoliants in Northern Ontario, the province has set up a new Agent Orange hotline to field concerns and questions from people who may have been exposed to toxic herbicides in Ontario during the 1950s, '60s and '70s. Toronto Star, Ontario.

[See a related article: [Agent Orange used widely in Ontario over decades, minister says](#)]

Fertilisers, plastics polluting world waters: UN.

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

Massive amounts of phosphorus, a fertiliser widely used in agriculture, and billions of pieces of plastic are poisoning the global marine environment, said the UN, calling for better management of global waste. Euractiv, Belgium.

[See other articles about water pollution: [Liberals demand toxic water inquiry](#); [Groundwater: Protecting East Texas' water supply from contamination](#); [Toxic fuel in the water again a concern in Central Texas](#); [Regulation lax as gas wells' tainted water hits rivers](#); [Water in Pa. to be tested for radioactivity](#); [EPA wants C8 monitoring for drinking water](#); [NCR, others must pay \\$700M for Wis. river cleanup](#); [Nitrates in drinking water warning](#); [Vaal River under siege](#); [Unregulated Drinking Water Initiative for Environmental Surveillance and Public Health](#) and [Removing arsenic from drinking water](#)]

Liver cancer study shows effects on immigrants.

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

A researcher examining cancer rates among California Latinos and Asians who were born in and out of the United States reached conclusions that reveal two very different versions of the American dream. San Francisco Chronicle, California.

[See a similar article: [Link between unhealthy behaviors and socioeconomic status differs between countries](#)]

The high price of beauty.

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

Are girls increasing their risk of breast cancer by wearing blush, or their chances of reproductive abnormalities by applying lip gloss? Right now, new legislation is being introduced to close what legislators call "major loopholes" in a federal law that they say leaves Americans unknowingly exposed to potentially harmful mystery ingredients. Providence WPRI TV, Rhode Island.

OSHA cites Oregon ballistic laboratories over employee lead contamination.

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

An Oregon ballistic laboratory has been fined by OSHA for several violations including lead poisoning their employees, one of which was at a near toxic level at 55 micrograms per deciliter, where 60 is hospitalization and 10 is the maximum you should have. Salem News, Oregon.

[See other articles about contaminated sites: [Villagers reap a deadly harvest of heavy metals](#); [National Highway polluted with toxicants: study](#); [AVX says military's poor handling, testing contributed to pollution](#) and [Exclusive: Seven former North County landfills leaking contaminants](#)]

Pesticides on fruit and veg 'are wrecking men's fertility.'

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

Pesticides found on fruit and vegetables could be doing untold damage to male fertility, research suggests. Thirty of 37 crop chemicals tested interfered with the action of testosterone, the sex hormone critical to a healthy male reproductive system. London Daily Mail, United Kingdom.

[See other articles about contaminated food: [Dioxin levels soar on Icelandic farms; Fast response crucial in outbreaks of food-borne illness, study finds](#) and [China's toxic rice problem](#)]

End of mercury thermometers is near.

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

It was one of Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit's most famous inventions, in 1714. But after nearly 300 years on the market, the still-common mercury thermometer now appears headed for extinction. Baltimore Sun, Maryland.

City drags its feet on antiquated light fixtures containing dangerous PCBs in schools.

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

All nine city schools spot-checked for PCBs in antiquated lighting fixtures this year had elevated levels of the potentially cancer-causing chemical, officials said. New York Daily News, New York.

[See a related article: [City to replace school lighting tainted by PCBs](#) and other articles on PCBs: [PCBs might be linked to failed IVF attempts](#) and [Fox River PCB cleanup gets \\$4.5M from U.S. government in proposed settlement](#)]

Supreme Court shields vaccine makers from lawsuits.

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

The Supreme Court on Tuesday shielded the nation's vaccine makers from being sued by parents who say their children suffered severe side effects from the drugs. Los Angeles Times, California.

Lessons Learned

Triclosan - an Unneeded Pesticide in Consumer Products

by Steven G. Gilbert, PhD, DABT

"Don't forget that the flavors of wine and cheese depend upon the types of infecting microorganisms." - Martin H. Fischer



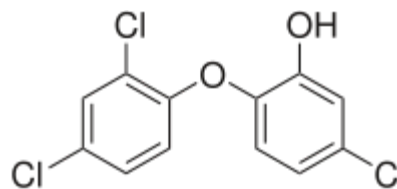
Bacteria or the dreaded germs are literally everywhere and are both friend and foe. More bacteria live on our skin, inhabit our mouths or live in our guts than the total number of cells in our bodies. Every surface has a bacteria colony of some form waiting to be picked up or reproduce. It is best to think of the world as covered in a thin layer of bacteria. What to do? As we tell our granddaughter - wash hands, wash, wash, wash. Whenever we come in the house we take off our shoes and wash our hands and we wash again before eating. Does washing get rid of all those germs? Of course not, but it does reduce the population of bacteria and removes the obvious dust and dirt. One of the principals of toxicology is dose / response; in general the smaller the dose the smaller the response. Washing reduces the number of bacteria or the dose and decreases the likelihood of a response.

Of course a fear of germs, manufactured or perceived, is an opportunity for some to make money. In the last decade there has been a proliferation of consumer products with antimicrobial additives. One of the most common is triclosan, first registered as a pesticide in 1969. It is generally considered an antibacterial agent, in that it kills bacteria on the skin and other surfaces. This is different from an antibiotic, which kills bacteria to treat a disease. Triclosan is used widely in many consumer products such as antibacterial soaps, deodorants, toothpastes, cosmetics, fabrics, plastics, and other products. Its chemical name is 5-Chloro-2-(2,4-dichlorophenoxy)phenol but called other names by the various manufactures such as Microban®, Irgasan®, Biofresh®, Lexol-300, Ster-Zac or

Cloxifenolium. Just for more confusion, some antibacterial soaps use triclocarban in place of triclosan.

Triclosan exposure may occur through ingestion of toothpaste or mouthwash containing triclosan and through dermal contact with consumer products containing triclosan, or through consumption of contaminated food and drinking water. Triclosan is a fat-soluble chemical that easily crosses cell membranes. Once inside the cell, triclosan poisons a specific enzyme that many bacteria and fungi need for survival. While most governments do not consider triclosan harmful, there is growing concern about the potential of endocrine effects, which the EPA is reviewing. Of great concern is that the widespread use of triclosan is encouraging the development of resistant bacteria. There is also evidence that it can contaminate water as we wash and flush it down the drain.

Keeping kids safe and protecting children from bacterial exposures does not require pesticides like triclosan in our soap but rather consistent use of soap. To ensure my granddaughter has an environment in which she can reach and maintain her full potential, I say wash, wash, wash.



Triclosan at Toxipedia: <http://toxipedia.org/display/toxipedia/Triclosan>

Looking back to go forward

Lessons Learned is a bulletin feature focusing on an historical event that provides an important lesson for ensuring a more sustainable and healthy environment. Please feel free to send suggestions to [Steve Gilbert](#).

Past Lessons Learned: <http://toxipedia.org/x/06Jb>

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

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)