



Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative

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



Biweekly Bulletin September 21, 2011

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

www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/learning/r/bulletins

LDDI Highlights

Autism Society Webinar September 24th

Please join The Autism Society from your home computer Saturday September 24th at noon as we welcome Dr. Suruchi Chandra and Dr. Anju Ussman to discuss Autism and Environment II: What We Know for the Clinic and Home. These two clinicians will discuss integrative medicine treatments for autism, summarize recent research of environmental exposures and the developing brain, and present steps to take in the home and school to optimize the environment of a person with autism. This webinar is free, and we welcome all who wish to learn. It is the second in our two-part series and will be recorded and archived on our website for future reference. For more information, please see event #1 below.

Webinar October 6th

"Powerful Message, Trusted Messengers: Health Advocates United for Chemical Policy Reform" is the title of a webinar to be presented by the Health Organization Work Group of Safer Chemicals Healthy Families. For health groups interested in preventing chronic diseases and conditions by reducing chemical exposures in the environment, this webinar will provide an opportunity to hear SCHF leaders give an update on legislative activities, discuss the importance and power of the health message and share ways to get more involved in SCHF efforts and activities. Please see event #5 below for more details.

LDDI / Autism Society Workshops in November and January

Three workshops titled "Environmental Influences on Neurodevelopment: Translating the Emerging Science into Public Health Policy" are scheduled in Texas, North Carolina and California. National experts from diverse sectors will highlight the latest research on associations between environmental exposures and early neurodevelopment as well as the implications for prevention-based public health policy. Please see the [workshop webpage](#) for details and registration.

Final Bulletin

This will be the last issue of this bulletin, which began as a weekly publication on January 3, 2006. It has been published biweekly since July 2007.

CHE is moving to more current and shorter postings to the LDDI listserv, and so a daily (or almost daily) summary of news, announcements, calls for proposals, job openings and upcoming events will replace this biweekly bulletin, starting today. These postings will be sent to all partners subscribed to the LDDI listserv. Partners are welcome to remove themselves from the listserv at any time, of course, although we trust that all will find the daily summaries timely, informative and brief enough to be user-friendly.

CHE partners can also check [CHE's website](#) at any time for our daily [news feed](#), [searchable calendar](#) and many other resources and features. [CHE's blog](#) will be updated regularly with news and summaries from our working groups and will allow partners to converse on recent studies, reports and other items of interest. Our [Facebook page](#) will alert Facebook users when noteworthy items are posted on either the website or the blog. We look forward to having you visit and engage with CHE and CHE partners through these technologies in addition to the LDDI listserv, and we welcome your feedback about the daily updates or any other CHE communications.

Announcements

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

[EPA launches Green Products web portal for Pollution Prevention Week.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is observing Pollution Prevention Week (September 19-25, 2011) by launching a new tool designed to provide Americans easy access to information about everyday products like home appliances, electronics and cleaning products that can save money, prevent pollution and protect people's health.

[Call for abstracts: Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conferences.](#)

The 2012 Regional Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conferences will reflect the character, challenges and opportunities unique to each region and bring the conversation about how to build a green economy to local communities. The deadline for submitting proposals is September 30, 2011.

[PEHSU fact sheet on fracking.](#)

The Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU) Network encourage families, pediatricians, and communities to work together to ensure that children are protected from exposure to environmental hazards and have published fact sheets about hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for health professionals and for parents and community members.

[EPA releases strategy to protect people's health and the environment in communities overburdened by pollution.](#)

Today the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the release of Plan EJ 2014, a three-year, comprehensive plan to advance environmental justice efforts in nine areas, including rulemaking, permitting, enforcement, and science.

[See other articles about environmental justice: [Environmental justice groups fight pollution problems on Southeast Side](#) and [Children on the frontlines: the e-waste epidemic in Africa](#)]

[Report offers framework for weighing health consequences of policies, projects.](#)

Factoring health and related costs into decision making is essential to confronting the nation's health problems and enhancing public well-being, says a new report from the National Research Council, which adds that a health impact assessment (HIA) is a promising tool for use by scientists, communities, and government and private sector policymakers.

[Legislative Database: The Most Anti-Environment House in History.](#)

Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Ranking Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, unveiled a new, searchable database of anti-environment votes by the 112th Congress. The database details the 125 votes taken to date by the House that undermine the protection of the environment.

[EPA and New York State announce ban on dumping sewage from boats into Long Island Sound.](#)

A 760 square-mile area of Long Island Sound is now a "no discharge zone," which means that boats are completely banned from discharging sewage into the water.

[Back to school: EPA encourages students, educators, parents to save money and protect the environment.](#)

The EPA provides tips to take action to help both the environment and your pocketbook, and many of which also promote health.

[EPA to hold three public hearings on proposed air pollution standards for oil and natural gas production.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will hold three public hearings in September on the agency's proposed standards to reduce air pollution from oil and gas drilling operations: September 27th in Pittsburgh, the 28th in Denver, and the 29th in Arlington, Texas.

[Call for proposals: 2011 Environmental Education Sub-Grants.](#)

The Environmental Education (EE) Sub-grants Program is a competitive grant program that supports EPA's efforts to increase public awareness and knowledge about environmental issues and provide participants in EE grant-funded projects the skills necessary to make informed environmental decisions and to take responsible actions toward the environment. Proposals are due November 8, 2011.

[Job opening: Tallahassee, Florida.](#)

The State of Florida has an opening for an environmental consultant to provide expert assistance to the legislature, state agencies, county health departments, and the public about the toxicity and risk to human health for various chemicals in the indoor and outdoor environments. The closing date is September 30, 2011.

[Job opening: San Francisco, California.](#)

Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA) is seeking an articulate, organized and hard-working candidate to join their team as a Staff Scientist. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Selections of candidates for interview will be made beginning August 31, 2011, and continue as long as well-qualified candidates present themselves.

[Job opening: Woodland Hills, California.](#)

The California Wellness Foundation is seeking an exceptional leader with significant expertise in public health, health care and related policy issues, who will provide leadership in the Foundation's eight prioritized health issues.

[Job opening: Washington, DC.](#)

Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) seeks a program director for PSR's Safe Energy Program to educate Congress, media and the public about the economic, health and proliferation risks associated with nuclear reactors and to promote safe, clean renewable energy and efficiency as the lasting solution to climate change. The closing date for this position is October 1, 2011.

Upcoming Events

Online Calendar. These and more upcoming events are listed in a searchable calendar: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/cgi-bin/searchevents.cgi> The calendar now lists deadlines for funding proposals and conference abstracts.

1) Autism and Environment II: What We Know for the Clinic and Home

Saturday September 24, 2011
noon Eastern time

Sponsor: The Autism Society

Please join The Autism Society from your home computer Saturday September 24th at noon as we welcome Dr. Suruchi Chandra and Dr. Anju Ussman. These two clinicians will discuss integrative medicine treatments for autism, summarize recent research of environmental exposures and the developing brain, and present steps to take in the home and school to optimize the environment of a person with autism. This webinar is

free and we welcome all who wish to learn. It is the second in our two-part series and will be recorded and archived on our website for future reference.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

2) Air Pollution and Neurodevelopment: How Prenatal Exposures May Impact I.Q.

Tuesday September 27, 2011

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

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

Air pollution is most often seen as a contributor to children's asthma and other respiratory problems. Emerging research, however, suggests that air pollution is linked to neurodevelopment concerns as well. Studies recently published in *Pediatrics* and *Environmental Health Perspectives*, in fact, found lower I.Q. levels in the children of mothers who were exposed during pregnancy to an array of pollutants, including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and organophosphate pesticides. Given school is back in session, how a child performs on I.Q. tests and other exams is a heightened concern for parents and school administrators. This research suggests that some kids may have a more challenging time reaching their full potential because of these early life exposures to air pollutants. On this call, leading researchers will discuss their recent findings as well as the potential implications for children's neurodevelopment.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: CHE, info@healthandenvironment.org

3) Epi Info™ 7 Webinar Demonstrations

one remaining date on September 27, 2011

Sponsor: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Epi Info™ 7, scheduled for release in fall 2011, represents a complete technology overhaul of the Epi Info platform. The Epi Info™ development team invites interested public health professionals who work with epidemiological data to attend one of these upcoming LiveMeeting webinars.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Sara Bedrosian, eri7@cdc.gov

4) The Role of Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) in Decisions that Affect Communities: A Case Study of Proposed Coal Mining in the Matanuska Valley

Thursday September 29, 2011

9:00 a.m. Alaska time / 10:00 a.m. Pacific / 1:00 p.m. Eastern

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment-Alaska

Environmental impact assessments, required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) typically focus on impacts to plants and animals, with less thorough assessment of the human health impacts of a proposed development project. A health impact assessment (HIA) is a process that uses scientific evaluation, professional expertise and stakeholder input to study health effects. The National Academy of Sciences recently endorsed the inclusion of HIAs as important in environmental review. Health impact assessments have been used internationally and are gaining traction in some states, including Alaska, as a voluntary process for assessing health effects among potentially affected communities. Alaska is seen by some as a leader in developing HIAs. In 2007, a health assessment was done under NEPA for the first time to assess the health implications of oil and gas development on the North Slope. The State of Alaska is

working on a "rapid assessment" HIA for the Wishbone Hill Coal project. Join this call to learn more about the need for comprehensive health impact assessments in policy decisions, opportunities and limitations of health impact assessments as a process for evaluating development projects, status of the Wishbone Hill coal project HIA, and a community perspective and concerns about HIAs.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: 907-222-7714 or diana@akaction.org

5) Powerful Message, Trusted Messengers: Health Advocates United for Chemical Policy Reform

Thursday October 6, 2011

2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Health Organization Work Group of Safer Chemicals Healthy Families

This webinar is for health groups interested in preventing chronic diseases and conditions by reducing chemical exposures in the environment. SCHF is a coalition of public health, health professional and environmental organizations working to fix our country's broken chemical policy by amending the Toxic Substances Control Act. The webinar will provide an opportunity to hear SCHF leaders give an update on legislative activities, discuss the importance and power of the health message and share ways to get more involved in SCHF efforts and activities. Nancy Buermeyer of the Breast Cancer Fund and Maureen Swanson of Learning Disabilities Association of America are spearheading the planning for the workshop.

Price: free

Contact: Joyce Martin, joyce@aaid.org

6) Quarterly Environmental Justice Outreach Teleconference

Thursday October 6, 2011

2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: US Environmental Protection Agency

The purpose of these calls is to provide information to participants about the Agency's EJ activities and maintain an open dialogue with EJ advocates. As EPA continues to advance Plan EJ 2014, the Agency hopes these calls will better inform the public about EPA's EJ work and enhance opportunities to take advantage of federal activities. The final agenda will be posted on the website no later than the day before the call.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: see the [Contact page](#)

7) The Relationship between Energy Policy and Environmental Health: The Case of Coal

Thursday October 20, 2011

12:30 - 1:20 p.m.

Seattle, Washington

at the University of Washington Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Room T-435

Sponsor: University of Washington Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

Melissa Ahern, MBA, PhD, associate professor of Pharmacotherapy at Washington State University, will speak as part of the ENV H 580 Environmental Health Seminar. This lecture is open to the public.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: DEOHS, 206-543-6991 or ehadmin@u.washington.edu

News and Journal Articles

[Burn pits' role in troops' array of illnesses fans concerns at VA.](#)

Monday, September 19, 2011

The Department of Veterans Affairs has commissioned the Institute of Medicine to conduct a study for release this fall to determine whether the illnesses of perhaps thousands of veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are linked to exposure to burn pits. Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Pennsylvania.

[See another article about war illness: [Complex factors in the etiology of Gulf War illness: wartime exposures and risk factors in veteran subgroups](#)]

[What did floodwater leave in farmers' fields?](#)

Sunday, September 18, 2011

In laymen's terms, Tropical Storm Irene moved heaven and earth. University of Vermont laboratory analyst Joel Tilley is concerned primarily with the latter. Dozens of plastic bags containing soil from the state's flooded farm fields arrive at his Jeffords Hall office these days for free testing. Burlington Free Press, Vermont.

[PCBs continue to affect Mohawk health.](#)

Sunday, September 18, 2011

Chemicals used at the General Motors Powertrain plant decades ago continue to exist in high levels among St. Regis Mohawk Reservation youths today, according to research completed at the University at Albany. Watertown Daily Times, New York.

[See other articles about industrial pollution: [Small community gets big ally in pollution fight](#); [Over 500 villagers protest China factory pollution](#); [China solar panel factory shut after protests](#); [Big polluter goes unchecked](#); [Groundwater pollution lingers at landfill near S.C. mountain](#); [Chromium slag contamination in China](#); [EPA, states seek common ground on Housatonic](#) and [Congressional leaders request full health study in Pompton Lakes](#)]

[A squirt of insulin may delay Alzheimer's.](#)

Friday, September 16, 2011

A small pilot study has found preliminary evidence that squirting insulin deep into the nose where it travels to the brain might hold early Alzheimer's disease at bay, researchers said on Monday. New York Times.

[What else can the analysis of sewage for urinary biomarkers reveal about communities?](#)

Friday, September 16, 2011

Public health agencies worldwide face the significant challenge as to how to quickly and reliably evaluate the overall health of a population. One solution may simply lie beneath our feet. Environmental Science & Technology.

[As U.S. poverty rates climb, so may health woes for the poor.](#)

Thursday, September 15, 2011

Poverty levels are up in the U.S., the Census Bureau reports, with the percentage of Americans living in poverty at its highest point since 1993. That will likely translate into increasing health issues for those people, since being poor seems inexorably linked to poor health. Los Angeles Times, California.

[Arsenic found in apple juice.](#)

Thursday, September 15, 2011

Dr. Oz is making some strong claims against one of America's most common drinks. Jacksonville WJXT TV, Florida.

[See other articles about heavy metals: [Stores agree to new health limits on metal \[cadmium\] in jewelry](#); [Texas agency releases list of violations, concerns at Exide plant in Frisco](#); [Water testing in Chicago raises concerns about screening process for lead](#)]

[Arsenic and diabetes: current perspectives; Racial bias seen in study of lead dust and children; China shuts U.S. plant over lead poisoning scare; Baltimore housing authority racking up legal bills for lead cases and Muskegon County receives million-dollar grant for lead-abatement project](#)]

Aerobic exercise may reduce the risk of dementia, researchers say.

Thursday, September 8, 2011

Researchers examined the role of aerobic exercise in preserving cognitive abilities and concluded that it should not be overlooked as an important therapy against dementia. ScienceDaily.

[See other articles about exercise and lifestyle: [Replace MyPlate.gov, which has important deficiencies, with our Healthy Eating Plate, says Harvard](#) and [For kids with ADHD, regular 'green time' is linked to milder symptoms](#)]

C8 Science Panel seeks public meetings.

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

A three-person panel studying the health effects of the toxic chemical C8 said Monday it would hold three public meetings later this month to hear from Mid-Ohio Valley residents. Charleston Gazette, West Virginia.

[See another article about C8, which is also known as PFOA: [Latest C8 research shows possible link to kidney disease](#)]

Judge deems second company liable for Passaic River dioxin cleanups.

Tuesday, September 13, 2011

A second company has been ruled liable by a judge for all past and future cleanups of cancer-causing dioxin from the Passaic River, state officials announced Tuesday. Bergen County Record, New Jersey.

[See other articles about liability and accountability: [Former EPA fugitive sentenced to more than seven years in prison for asbestos training scam; 32 held in crackdown on nation's swill oil scandal; EPA orders Northrop to spend \\$20 million to build groundwater treatment plant in Valley; Libby asbestos victims win \\$43M settlement from state and Livingston awarded \\$9 million settlement](#)]

Never too soon: means to reduce violence may start in utero.

Sunday, September 11, 2011

Attention to health factors as early as the prenatal stage could prevent violence in later life, reports Penn Nursing Assistant Professor Jianghong Liu, PhD, RN, in the journal Aggression and Violent Behavior. ScienceDaily.

Poor air quality at home can lead to health concerns.

Sunday, September 11, 2011

Pollution from car exhaust, ozone and other factors contribute to the quality of the air, but many people don't notice the air within their own homes. Salt Lake Deseret Morning News, Utah.

[See other articles about air quality: [Air pollution and acute respiratory response in a panel of asthmatic children along the US-Mexico border; If it's smoky out, stay in, experts say; Wind shifts improves air quality from wildfires; Air pollution a growing problem in the Czech Republic; Experts to address pollution issue at expo; Finnish emissions 'cause Swedish birth defects'; PCA board approves Keetac expansion air permit; Campaign aims to drive down ozone levels in area; Protesters attack Port of Seattle salaries, seek better conditions for workers, less air pollution and Environmentalists blast Obama on change in 'Clean Air' stance](#)]

Making the case for health impact assessments.

Saturday, September 10, 2011

A report released yesterday by the National Academies' National Research Council (NRC) provides a ringing endorsement of such efforts, called a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The report not only provides guidelines for conducting these analyses, but also argues for their value on both public and private construction projects, from urban farmers' markets to federal highways. Science.

Brazilian Blowout gets blowback from the FDA.

Saturday, September 10, 2011

The FDA has sent a warning letter to the makers of Brazilian Blowout confirming that the product is "adulterated" with the liquid form of formaldehyde, "which, under the conditions of use prescribed in the labeling," releases dangerous levels of the chemical -- a known carcinogen -- into the air to be inhaled. Time Magazine.

[See another article about regulation of hazardous consumer products: [Inquiry into proliferation of toxic toys pushed](#)]

Impasse persists on drugs in drinking water.

Friday, September 09, 2011

Five years after the federal government convened a task force to study the risks posed by pharmaceuticals in the environment, it is no closer to understanding the problem or whether these contaminants should be regulated under the Clean Water Act. New York Times.

[See another article about water quality: [Multiagency pact seeks better way to clean up TCE](#)]

Does a healthy environment harm jobs?

Friday, September 09, 2011

Despite easing off on one particular clean air regulation last week, there's every indication President Obama plans on tightening a half-dozen other environmental rules in the months ahead. That has become a lightning rod for the business community and Republican lawmakers. CNN Money.

Mold removal in homes, offices could cut respiratory illness.

Friday, September 09, 2011

A new evidence review finds that ridding homes and offices of mold and dampness can help reduce respiratory infections and troubling symptoms for asthma sufferers across the globe; however, the best way to eliminate the mold remains unclear. Health Behaviors News Service.

[See another article about hazards in homes: [Health officials warn of risks to those returning to damaged and destroyed homes](#)]

Long-term health effects of environmental factors is focus of new \$1.75-million study.

Friday, September 09, 2011

How exposure to chemicals and other environmental factors from the earliest months of life -- even before we are born -- affect our long-term health is the subject of a new five-year study by a scientist at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Newsroom.

Report on sand mining pollutant inconclusive.

Thursday, September 08, 2011

There is little conclusive information on possible negative health effects of a pollutant linked to Wisconsin's burgeoning sand mining industry, the Department of Natural Resources said in a new report Tuesday. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wisconsin.

[See other articles about mining and extraction: [Blood Tribe members set up anti-fracking blockade](#); [Four oil and gas companies responsible for 350 spills named "outstanding operators" by regulators](#); [Drilling spills rise in Colorado, but fines rare](#) and [Science lags as health problems emerge near gas fields](#)]

Banned pesticide use remains high in California strawberry fields.

Thursday, September 08, 2011

In some of California's top strawberry-growing counties, levels of banned methyl bromide remain nearly as high as they were a decade ago, despite a mandated phaseout, according to an analysis by New America Media. New America Media.

[See another article about pesticides: [12 held in sale of pest poisons, one 60 times as potent as the legal limit](#)]

What was in the World Trade Center plume?

Thursday, September 08, 2011

Ten years later, what exactly residents and rescue workers were exposed to remains at least a partial mystery. The question is: did all those toxicants -- whether dust particles or air pollution -- harm human health? Scientific American.

[See other articles about the World Trade Center disaster: [Documents suggest officials downplayed risks to workers after 9/11](#); [In Manhattan, children still battle 9/11-related illnesses](#); [NYC 9/11 rescuers experience lingering health problems](#) and [5 reasons the dust of 9/11 was a killer](#)]

Study moves towards unlocking autism mystery.

Thursday, September 08, 2011

A new study has discovered there are different biological types of autism, with genetics, the immune system and the environment all thought to be factors in causing the varied forms. Australia ABC News, Australia.

[See other articles about autism: [Research making leaps, bounds in understanding autism: partners](#); [Antidepressants associated with autism](#) and [Children with autism and gastrointestinal symptoms have altered digestive genes](#)]

Lawmakers OK bill to ban BPA in baby bottles.

Thursday, September 08, 2011

Lawmakers sent a bill to Gov. Jerry Brown's desk yesterday that would ban the use of the chemical bisphenol A in baby bottles and sippy cups, marking a victory for health and environmental advocates who've sought a similar measure since early 2009. California Watch.

[See another article about BPA: [Study sees no clear link between BPA, diabetes](#)]

Kids miss more school when people smoke in the house.

Thursday, September 08, 2011

Smoking doesn't just harm kids' health -- it also may lower their performance in school and cost their families money. That's because children who live in homes where at least one person smokes inside the house miss more days of school than kids who live in non-smoking homes. Los Angeles Times, California.

[See other articles about tobacco use: [Study: one in four look down on smokers](#); [Fewer Americans smoke, pace of decline slowing: CDC](#); [Public health suffers as Indonesia ignores calls for tobacco reform](#); [Incurable, little-known lung disease \[COPD\] a major health issue: study](#); [Female smokers have more bladder symptoms](#); [Hookah pipes escape bong ban](#); [Smokers don't make better lovers: study](#); [Try smokeless nicotine cigarettes, says government](#); [New e-cigarette ban proposed](#); [Survey finds decline in New Yorkers who smoke to 14%](#) and [Turning up the voltage of smoking shock warnings](#)]

Exposure to phthalates and phenols during pregnancy and offspring size at birth.

Thursday, September 08, 2011

Consistent with findings of a previous study, we observed evidence of an inverse association of 2,5-dichlorophenol and a positive association of benzophenone-3 with male birthweight. Environmental Health Perspectives.

[See another article about phthalates: [Plastic toys could be harming your kid](#)]

Lessons Learned

Oil Dispersants - Is There a Right to Know?

by Steven G. Gilbert, PhD, DABT

"Toxicity tests were not conducted at the same pressures and temperatures where much of the dispersant was applied - 5,000 feet beneath the surface at the wellhead. That

leaves uncertainties about how the dispersant might affect the ecosystem at that depth."

-Dr. Paul Anastas, EPA

"More than 1m barrels of chemicals have been deployed so far. This is common practice for oil spills on the surface; using them in bulk at depth, as in the Gulf, is an ecological experiment."

-The Economist, July 15, 2010

We all use and depend upon oil dispersants in the form of soaps and shampoos. The first recorded production of soap-like materials was in 2800 BC in ancient Babylon. One of the first formulas for soap consisting of water, alkali and cassia oil, was on a Babylonian clay tablet from 2200 BC. Sapo, Latin for soap, first appears in Pliny the Elder's *Historia Naturalis* in 80 AD and discusses the manufacture of soap from tallow and ashes. The professional manufacture of soap started in the 15th century in Provence, France and by the 16th century became a more refined soap, using vegetable oils (such as olive oil) instead of animal fats. The 1800s saw the start of high-quality, transparent soap in London and with that much cheaper and more common soaps.



Oil dispersants are also a common tool used after oil spills to break up oil slicks on the water surface and increase the oil's rate of biodegradation. By breaking up large slicks, oil dispersants are intended to reduce harmful oil exposures of birds, fish, and other wildlife in proximity to spills. Two oil dispersant products were used heavily in the 2010 BP oil leak: COREXIT 9500 and 9527, both produced by Nalco. BP has used over 1,800,000 gallons of dispersant since the start of the oil well blow out. The challenge is that much of the

dispersant was used at the wellhead at temperatures and pressures that have never been studied.

Before starting out such a giant experiment, it would have been helpful to know the chemical composition of the oil dispersants as well as data on efficacy and safety. Unfortunately this information was difficult or impossible to obtain because manufacturers claimed that this data was confidential business information. In 2011 the EPA released an aggregate list of all the chemicals found in oil dispersant products that the agency has approved for use in the event of an oil spill. However the exact chemical composition of individual dispersants was not released.

Our responsibility to human health and the environment should come before our desire to make money during a time of crisis. We have an ethical responsibility to ensure that our children have an environment in which they can reach and maintain their full potential, and this includes full disclosure about the composition of products we use or are exposed to.

Oil dispersants on Toxipedia: <http://toxipedia.org/x/YZ9b>

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/O6Jb>

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 general children's environmental health:

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

- 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 LDDI 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 Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative Working Group at the bottom of the application.

Nancy Hepp
Collaborative on Health and the Environment

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)