

HECANET April 2005

A service provided for HECA by [UNEP](#)

IN THIS ISSUE

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

* To reflect activities in the next issue of HECANET send information to heca@nyo.unep.org

- (1) HECA Developments**
- (2) Children's Environmental Health Indicators Initiative (CEHI)**
- (3) WHO Children and POPs side-event during the first COP meeting of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**
- (4) IPA/WHO/UNEP Workshop for African Pediatricians on Children's Health and the Environment**
- (5) International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage**
- (6) WHO-PAHO: Health and Environmental Ministerial Meeting of the Americas (HEMA)**
- (7) UNEP - Children's World Summit for the Environment**
- (8) Commission on Sustainable Development, Thirteenth Session (CSD13)**
- (9) Earth Day 2005 - "Protect our children and our future"**
- (10) 14th WIT International Conference on Health and Environment**
- (11) Pediatric Academic Societies' Annual Meeting**
- (12) University of Minnesota President's 21st Century Interdisciplinary Conference Series Promoting Healthy Communities for Children**
- (13) Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment: Conference on Children's Health and the Environment**
- (14) Stony Brook University Environmental Health Program: Environmental Health Conference on Iraq-Amman**
- (15) International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety (INCHES)**

ARTICLES

A wide-range of children's environmental health issues were covered by the media around the world. Water and sanitation issues received attention, particularly in light of the focus and outcome of this year's UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and related events/released studies, including the Little Green Data Book, and efforts by the NGO Green Cross to push for a treaty on the right to water. Water and sanitation issues in Iraq, Ghana, and the Middle East (cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians) were covered. Attention was also devoted to World Health Day, malaria in Africa, the threat of pollution and urbanization pose in East Asia, waste disposal in Jordan, rising skin cancer rates in children, and the lasting tragic effects of the Chernobyl disaster.

Indoor air was declared two to five times more polluted than outside by EPA, which placed indoor air pollution among the top five environmental risks to public health. The American media devoted attention to a new Californian study which indicated that children riding on school buses are breathing in more pollution than people standing out on the streets. With regard to outdoor air pollution there was a new review of literature related to the possible adverse effects of ambient air pollution on birth outcomes. There were numerous articles on the effects of air pollution in developing country cities, including in Manila (where up to 98% of residents are affected), Bangalore, Santiago, and Hong Kong. A number of studies addressed the effects of smog on children's lung development, asthma, as well as economic costs (in the context of new regulations in California and the 2005 American Lung Association- State of the Air report). New rules were adopted in New York to control diesel emissions and efforts continued to curb school bus pollution. The rise of childhood asthma rates in developing countries was addressed by one article, which indicated that approximately 20% of children in Pakistan alone are inflicted with the disease. Smoking during pregnancy and effects of ETS were addressed by numerous articles, which covered the global tobacco treaty, ETS and conception, parents exposing their children to cigarette smoke, and new research which suggests that a woman who smokes during pregnancy could increase her grandchild's risk of developing asthma.

The effects of chemicals on children was widely covered by the media, including in the context of: the first meeting of the Stockholm Convention on POPs; revised EPA guidelines on carcinogens which account for the likelihood that children may be more vulnerable to exposure than adults; a new study on prenatal PAH exposure and genetic changes in newborns; community awareness of the effects of chemicals on children; chemical pollution from industry and effects on communities (in South Africa, Albania, the Amazon, and China); the effects of bisphenol-A (BPA), which is widely used to make many plastics found in feeding bottles for infants; perchlorate in drinking water; arsenic in playgrounds; chemicals in cosmetics; and the effects of fire retardants. Lead poisoning continued to receive coverage globally, from Peru (mining), the Philippines, Kenya and Gambia, (leaded fuel), Kosovo (in refugee camps), to the US (lead paint, lead in dust from renovations, new regulations, and lead in tableware and kids jewelry). Pesticides were addressed in the context of: DDT use against malaria in Africa; a new study on exposure of pregnant women to organophosphorus pesticides and several birth outcomes; the effects of pesticides in children of farm workers (in the US and in developing countries); the legacy of agent orange in Vietnam; and lingering controversy with regard to the now-cancelled EPA study of child pesticide exposure in Florida (related to the US Senate confirmation of the new head of US EPA). Mercury continued to receive widespread media coverage particularly in the US, with articles addressing: the effects on IQ; EPA's estimates of economic benefits of curbing mercury pollution in relation to its new rules for coal-fired power stations, the merits of which continue to be the subject of much debate (as well as legal action); mercury in fish, and in vaccines (and possible links to autism). Summaries of articles grouped under the following themes appear below, with links to their full texts:

- (1) AIR POLLUTION:** (a) Indoor air pollution, (b) Outdoor air pollution (c) Asthma (d) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking
- (2) CHEMICALS:** (a) General, (b) Lead, (c) Pesticides, (d) Mercury (e) Fire retardants
- (3) WATER AND SANITATION**
- (4) MISCELLANEOUS**

Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) is a world-wide alliance to reduce environmental risks to children's health that arise from the settings where they live, learn, play, and sometimes work, by providing knowledge, increasing political will, mobilizing resources, and catalysing intense and urgent action.

HECANET is an international mailing list dedicated to promoting healthy environments for children. The list provides updates on the activities of the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) and its members, as well as an overview of media coverage of children's environmental health issues and relevant meetings, research findings and information and advocacy resources.

** [Past Issues](#)*

** [Subscribe](#)*

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

(1) HECA Developments

The Healthy Environments for Children Alliance Secretariat participated in a path-breaking consultation meeting hosted by WHO on [Child Injury Prevention](#) (31 March and 1 April 2005). WHO staff from four departments in headquarters and four regional offices teamed up with UNICEF and 28 other delegates from international and regional child injury prevention organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations, foundations and donors to: (i) Outline the current situation in child injuries; (ii) Establish potential areas for effort and collaboration; (iii) Develop a WHO child injury prevention strategy; and (iv) Discuss the rationale, concepts and process for the development of a World Report on Child Injury Prevention. The HECA Secretariat was represented by Catherine Mulholland to give emphasis to the importance of prevention of unintentional injuries in ensuring healthy environments for children. Key outcomes of the meeting included: (i) Agreement on the process and strategy for developing the WHO child injury prevention strategy which will be finalized for launch at the World Injury Prevention meeting in April 2006 in Durban, South Africa; (ii) Preparation of a scientific paper for publication in a major public health journal; (iii) Production of a "white paper" or short document for policy/decision-makers and donors to begin to focus policy attention on the problem and why it needs to be addressed, and illustrate how it is amenable to

intervention; (iv) Intensify the process of advocacy for action on child injury prevention using existing champions and pressure groups and lobbying sectors beyond the health ministry; and (v) Increasing knowledge and information on child injuries and prevention strategies by examining the "grey" literature un-published case studies, and conducting multi-country or site studies on non-fatal outcomes and health seeking information. The full proceedings of the meeting will be made available shortly on the meeting's [website](#), and it is likely that a follow-up meeting will be held in late 2005 to finalize the strategy and policy document and discuss next steps.

(2) Children's Environmental Health Indicators Initiative (CEHI)

The third issue of the "Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators" newsletter (April) is available on the [initiative's web-site](#). CEHI newsletter has been set up to engage partners with the Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI). It aims to provide up-to-date information on relevant global, regional and national indicator activities. Topics covered include World Health Day 2005 (7 April 2005); the Expert Consultation on the Health and Environmental Linkages Initiative (HELI) and Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI), 28-31st March 2005 Amman, Jordan; Indicator pilot projects; Chemical Safety Recommendations; and the Tsunami in Asia -What about the children? For further enquiries, please contact the [CEHI Secretariat](#).

(3) WHO Children and POPs side-event during the first COP meeting of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

Children and POPs - Protecting our Most Precious Resource: Enabling children to secure a safer, cleaner and healthier world - 4 May 2005 – Punta del Este, Uruguay: One of the main objectives of the Stockholm Convention is to protect human health and the environment from the harmful impact of persistent organic pollutants. In Articles 7 and 10 the Convention refers to the potential effects on vulnerable population groups and to the need to develop and implement, especially for women and children, educational and public awareness programmes. In view of the above, the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment of Uruguay, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS), are organizing a special event on the special vulnerability of children and on the need to take concerted action. The programme includes statements by distinguished speakers and authorities, the presentation of a documentary and the lively participation of a children's choir. For more information on the Stockholm Convention and the meeting, please visit the [Convention's web-site](#) and the available press-backgrounder on [UNEP's web-site](#).

(4) IPA/WHO/UNEP Workshop for African Pediatricians on Children's Health and the Environment

An important workshop will be held on October 12-14, 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya. In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Pediatric Association (IPA) is sponsoring a 3-day workshop on Children's Health and the Environment. During this workshop, providers will learn about the harmful effects of air pollution, water contamination and unsafe food on the health of children. The course is designed for African doctors who plan to teach other providers about children's health and the environment. We will discuss how pediatricians from countries throughout Africa can work together to help improve the environment for tomorrow's children. This issue is a cross-cutting one that may be every bit as important as nutrition in its overall impact on child health. Please [contact IPA](#) if you would like to place your name on a list to receive additional information and a registration form for this workshop.

(5) International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage

Simple techniques for treating water at home and storing it in safe containers could save a huge number of child lives every year. Home treatment options (e.g. filtration or disinfection using chlorine or even sunlight) are cheap, dramatically improve water quality, and can be deployed rapidly. In this context, the WHO-led International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage is convening its [3rd Annual Meeting 30-31 May 2005](#), convened back-to-back with the 2005 International Symposium on Household Water Management, 1-2 June 2005, in Bangkok, Thailand. More details on these meetings, including a call-out for presentations, posters and registration forms, can be accessed through the [Network website](#). The meetings will review progress and future directions of the Network, together with the state of the art in treatment technologies and systems, including the results of recent field research, and issues related to scaling-up implementation. For more information, contact [Bruce Gordon of the Network Secretariat](#).

(6) WHO-PAHO: Health and Environmental Ministerial Meeting of the Americas (HEMA)

The Organization of American States is organizing the 3rd Meeting of Ministers of Health and Environment of the Americas. (HEMA), which will take place in Mar del Plata, Argentina, on June 18 and 19, 2005. Children's health and environment is likely to feature prominently on the agenda. The conference will be entitled, "Towards the Millennium Development Goals Achievement". The aim of the Third Meeting is to prepare and agree joint strategies to facilitate the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Objectives in the countries of the region. The Ministers of Health and Environment of the Americas will review the progress of actions carried out in compliance with agreements adopted in the two initial meetings (Washington 1995 and Ottawa 2002). Successful experiences and difficulties on environment and health will be identified. Useful information will be shared to develop national and regional strategies. More information is available on the [HEMA web-site](#).

(7) UNEP - Children's World Summit for the Environment

UNEP and the Aichi Prefectural Government of Japan will host the first [Children's World Summit for the Environment](#) in Toyohashi and Toyota cities, Japan, from 26 to 29 July 2005. The Summit will bring together up to 1,000 children, aged 10 to 14 years, and adult chaperones to review the implications of environmental problems to their livelihood. The Summit will endeavour to increase children's understanding of environmental issues through the sharing of experiences and opinions and will provide an opportunity for them to collectively voice their concerns for the environment. It will also inspire them to initiate and implement community environmental projects and to remove ethnic barriers while creating new relationships that will last well beyond the Summit.

(8) Commission on Sustainable Development, Thirteenth Session (CSD13)

CSD 13, held from 11 to 22 April 2005, wrapped up its 2005 session with agreement on set of practical policy options intended to boost global efforts to provide clean water, basic sanitation and decent housing. As underscored by Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs prior to the session, "These three issues encapsulate the silent humanitarian crisis in the world today, where roughly four thousand children die each day of diarrheal diseases caused by poor sanitation and contaminated drinking water, and where the living conditions in crowded slums are exacerbating public health issues such as communicable diseases." CSD's first policy session following the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) refocused international attention on the UN Millennium Declaration, which contains two development targets that relate directly to water and human settlements – namely to halve by 2015 the proportion of people unable to reach or afford safe drinking water, and, by 2020, to have significantly improved the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. More information is available on the [CSD13 web-site](#).

CSD13 reached agreement on a slate of policy measures aimed at speeding up implementation of water, sanitation and human settlements goals, ending its high-level segment and first-ever policy session, and opened its next one, which will focus on energy. Under the terms of the outcome document, which will be submitted to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for review at its annual session in July, the Commission emphasized the need for a substantial increase in resources from all sources if developing countries were to achieve the internationally agreed development targets. The text recognizes that governments have the primary role in promoting improved access to safe drinking water, basic sanitation and adequate shelter, through improved governance at all levels and appropriate enabling environments and regulatory frameworks, with the active involvement of all stakeholders. At the same time, efforts by governments to achieve the agreed goals and targets should be supported by the international community through a conducive international policy environment, including good global governance; a universal, rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system; mobilization and transfer of financial resources; debt relief, including debt cancellation, where appropriate; public-public and public-private partnerships; technical cooperation and capacity-building; and technology transfers.

Notably, with regard to sanitation and hygiene education, CSD13 decided to: "Support countries in promoting sanitation and hygiene education and awareness raising, focusing on the following measures: (i) Promoting gender-sensitive sanitation and hygiene education and awareness, including through social marketing and public information campaigns such as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH), and improve understanding of the linkages among sanitation, hygiene and health; (ii) With an emphasis on children and youth, incorporating gender-sensitive hygiene education in school curricula and ensuring the provision of separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls in all schools; and (iii) Promoting the involvement of women, youth and community groups in sanitation and hygiene education programmes. A number of side-events during the

session addressed these issues, including one hosted by UNICEF.

During one of the sessions of the high-level segment, UNICEF said that it had brought much to the table as an active player in water and sanitation for more than 40 years. It supported "low-cost and low-technical" water and sanitation programmes in rural areas and urban slums in more than 90 countries, and it employed several hundred highly skilled technicians. The Fund spent some \$150 million each year on those programmes, which was one of the largest contributions of the United Nations family. Indeed, UNICEF had been playing a leading role in promoting water, sanitation and hygiene in schools and in combating water-borne diseases. UNICEF was also playing a leading role in coordinating water and sanitation activities in emergencies and humanitarian crises. UNICEF looked at water and sanitation not just as an essential utility to meet basic human needs, but as a powerful means to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Lack of water, sanitation and hygiene was harmful to children's health and nutrition, which perpetuated poverty. Lack of those facilities impacted school attendance, especially among girls, retarding education and development. Proper hygiene was key to improving sanitation. Teaching and inculcating good hygiene behaviour to children at a young age was the most effective way to promote sanitation. UNICEF, as a strong supporter of water, sanitation and hygiene for many years, intended to expand that role, with its UN partners, in the more than 90 countries where it was active.

(9) Earth Day 2005 - "Protect our children and our future"

On Friday, April 22, Earth Day celebrated its 35th anniversary. Earth Day 2005 and the theme "Protect our children and our future" inspired a wide variety of events sponsored by Earth Day Network (EDN) and partners around the globe. These events, which included rallies, forums, meetings and marches, served to draw worldwide attention to pressing issues such as poverty, environmental degradation, chronic diseases and ailments among children - such as asthma - along with other environmental health issues including polluted air in inner city neighborhoods and the lack of clean drinking water.

Around the world, in communities large and small, in classrooms, in parks and on beaches, in places of worship, from Kiev to Beijing, from India to Romania, from Africa to the Americas, Earth Day supporters demonstrated the diversity and resilience of the human spirit, and the desire to make our planet safer, cleaner, and healthier. Notable Earth Day events included the first environmental rally in Kiev, Ukraine, where leaders of the new democratic government addressed more than 250,000 citizens, and a series of events throughout the U.S. focused on air and water pollution in inner city communities. EDN also collaborated to expand civic action in China and Venezuela, promoting the interconnected values of juvenile health, conservation, and citizen responsibility through environmental education. In Israel, EDN directed a conference on water sustainability that brought together historically opposed ethnic groups to develop sustainable solutions to regional water issues. Earth Day is about inspiring ordinary people to work together and create healthy environments for everybody, everyday. This year, hundreds of thousands of nongovernmental organizations, governments, teachers, and faith-based groups, among others, participated in events and declared that they are part of something extraordinary: a worldwide movement to protect our planet, our children, and our future.

In Venezuela, EDN teamed up for the second year in a row with NGO partner, Vitalis. In line with EDN's 2005 theme of "Protecting Our Children and Our Future," one of Vitalis' main objectives is to work with children to contribute to the formation of values, knowledge, and conduct that foster environmental conservation and sustainable development. Vitalis organized several event activities on and around Earth Day that are focused around the themes of conservation and citizen responsibility through environmental education.

On April 22 at the Caracas Botanical Garden, 300 students from 12 schools representing various social backgrounds in and around Caracas, took an oath as Citizens of the World. Special guests included the Venezuelan Minister of Education and a representative of the Ministry of the Environment, and the US Ambassador to Venezuela. Student representatives from each of the 12 participating schools presented on the themes of water conservation and protection, reducing solid waste, clean/renewable energy sources, reusing and recycling physical materials, protecting natural areas and resources, the dangers of chemicals and pesticides, and the need to respect the rights of other people and cooperate to create unique, sustainable solutions. Afterwards there was a question and answer session, followed by the taking of the oath of 10 commitments, in which the students pledged to care for and conserve the planet, its resources and inhabitants, today and in the future. The event was unique in that these children are not only the first to ever take such an oath of stewardship, but also because the children themselves took responsibility for learning about these issues, and understanding many of the essential connections

that exist between the interconnected domains of environment, economy, and community health. They were the stars on Earth Day. They expressed that they care about their community and their planet - that they are going to work to educate themselves and other people so that they will care too, and take the steps necessary to make progressive, positive change. One of the overall objectives of the activity was to highlight the important role young people can play as global environmental leaders. The event was incredibly high spirited and well received, and Vitalis intends to follow up throughout the coming school years with a program of environmental education that will expand to some 7000 children within and beyond the city of Caracas.

For more information please visit the [Earth Day website](#).

(10) 14th WIT International Conference on Health and Environment

The 14th World Information Transfer International Conference on Health and Environment: Global Partners for Global Solutions was held 28-29 April 2005 at UN headquarters in New York. Information on the conference can be found on [WIT's web-site](#). The focus of this year's conference was on 'Bridging Policies for Action on MDGs'. UNEP addressed one of the sessions on the issue 'The Environmental Underpinnings of the Health MDGs'. UNEP's statement (delivered by Mr. Adnan Amin, Director UNEP's New York Office), which included information on HECA, is available on the [New York Office web-site](#). Dr. Christine K. Durbak, Chair and Founder, WIT addressed in her opening remarks both the continuing effects of POPs and the Chernobyl disaster on children.

(11) Pediatric Academic Societies' Annual Meeting

The Pediatric Academic Societies' Annual Meeting (May 14-17 in Washington, DC) will feature a Global Environmental Health Mini Course, chaired by Ruth A. Etzel, George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, Washington, DC. Pollution knows no borders, and efforts to protect children from hazards in the environment have increasingly recognized that some of the highest exposures to children occur in the developing world. This 6-hour mini course will provide pediatricians with information about exposures, treatments and prevention of diseases linked to environmental contamination. Target Audience: Scientists and clinicians who are interested in the problems facing children in the low- and middle-income countries will learn about selected environmental health issues from experts who have worked in international settings. The deadline for advance registration is April 15, 2005. Registration information is available on the [conference web-site](#).

Topics will be: (1) Environmental Threats to Children's Health, (2) Children's Health and the Environment: A Global Perspective, (3) Arsenic in Drinking Water and Implications for Global Child Health, (4) DDT, Malaria and Infant Mortality, (5) Radiation Effects on the Pediatric Thyroid: What Have We Learned from the Chernobyl Accident?, (6) Childhood Pneumonia and Indoor Air Pollution in Developing Countries: Results from the First Randomized Trial, (7) Neurological Diseases Hidden in the Third World, (8) Selenium Status and Keshan Disease in China, (9) Environmental Pediatrics in the Developing World: The Need for Prospective Studies, and (10) Environmental Threats to Children in Developing Countries: Key Research Needs.

(12) University of Minnesota President's 21st Century Interdisciplinary Conference Series Promoting Healthy Communities for Children

September 26-27, 2005, University of Minnesota, Continuing Education Center St. Paul, Minnesota. Unhealthy and unsafe environments put children at risk in many ways from toxicants in the air, food, and water to inadequate/overcrowded housing; unsafe, inaccessible spaces for recreation; geographic concentrations of poverty and wealth; traffic dangers; differential access to social, political and material resources; school violence; discrimination; social isolation; powerful media influences . the list could go on. From conception through adolescence, children are disproportionately affected by exposure to environmental risks because they have greater physiological and psychological vulnerabilities during stages of rapid and formative development, and they have less power to influence and shape their environment. This conference will examine critical aspects of the environment as they affect the health and well-being of children and adolescents. Conference plenary and breakout sessions will be organized around three broad themes: (i) the natural environment including the quality of our air, water, and soil; exposure to lead, environmental tobacco smoke, and noise; industrial waste disposal; (ii) the built environment including parks, sidewalks, bikeways, transportation networks, urban/suburban/rural planning and development,

zoning regulations, housing codes, disability accessibility; and (iii) the social environment including social processes and conditions related to economic and political power and decision making; human connections at an ecological level, such as social capital, efficacy, and cohesion; family relationships; safe schools; discrimination due to race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender, age. The audience will be multidisciplinary, reflecting the variety of conference co-sponsors and the many disciplines involved in addressing environmental impacts on children's health. Attendees will include researchers, practitioners, public health professionals, and graduate students. Abstracts are invited for poster and oral presentations in two broad categories: 1) studies reporting evidence of the impact of adverse environmental exposures on children's health, and 2) evidence-based programs, policies, or interventions that have been implemented to reduce risk exposure and enhance protective factors in the environment. Submissions are due by April 15, 2005. Please [contact the University](#).

(13) Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment: Conference on Children's Health and the Environment

A Conference on Children's Health and the Environment will be held on Saturday, October 1, 2005 in Baltimore, Maryland. The conference will focus on: Emerging Issues in Children's Environmental Health; Childhood Obesity & the Environment; School Environmental Health Problems; Asthma; Mold Issues; Outcomes of Environmental Exposures * birth defects, learning problems; Risk Communication; and the Resources of a Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit. CME or CEU credits for physicians or nurses can be earned. The Conference is sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment, the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, and Region 3 Environmental Protection Agency. For more information contact [Aurora Amoah](#) at the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health & the Environment.

(14) Stony Brook University Environmental Health Program: Environmental Health Conference on Iraq-Amman

International Environmental Health Conference on Iraq, 19-22 September 2005, Amman, Jordan, hosted by Stony Brook University Environmental Health Program, New York and the Agency of International Development (US/AID). Military conflicts, long-term international sanctions, isolation and rapid industrialization have turned Iraq's environment into an unprecedented, environmental disaster adversely affecting human health in Iraq and the surrounding countries. Consequently, the Iraqi healthcare system has been overwhelmed with a variety of environmentally related acute and chronic disorders, including respiratory and diarrheal diseases and adverse reproductive outcomes. Recent scientific reports have indicated significant increases in the incidence of cancer, physical and mental disabilities and congenital abnormalities. The situation has further deteriorated in recent years due to severely restricted access to modern scientific and medical knowledge and the almost complete isolation of Iraqi researchers, scientists and university faculty from their peers in the international community.

This conference will address environmental issues facing Iraq using the latest research and scientific studies and attempt to develop recommendations to address these problems. The conference will provide a venue for Iraqi and international scientists to present research work and advances related to environmental health in Iraq. It will allow Iraqi medical professionals to exchange information with their peers from the international community and it will help bridge the isolation of the Iraqi medical and environmental community by facilitating interactions and collaboration with international attendees. Additionally, the conference will stimulate long-term collaborative efforts among Iraqi scientists from different institutions or disciplines and with their foreign peers, thus encouraging research work and studies addressing various environmental and health problems affecting the region. Iraqi researchers and scientists will present the most recent research in the various disciplines related to health and the environment.

Children in Iraq: Although all segments of the population in Iraq have suffered from environmental contaminants, children have been especially affected. Due to neglect, repeated military conflicts, and international sanctions, over 500,000 children have died in the past decade. The primary cause of death among children is malnourishment and infectious diseases which arise due to a lack of basic health and sanitation services. The situation is worsened by congenital malformations and defects caused by exposure to radioactive material and chemicals associated with wars. In the post-Gulf War period, the infant mortality rate rose to 103/1000 due to the severe health deterioration in the country in the 1990's. This is nearly double the ratio prior to that period. The mortality rate of children under five years of age in Iraq is now the worst in the world. UNICEF reports that Iraq ranks 126th out of 174 on the list of UN Human Development Index, while it ranked 50th out of 130 on the list in 1990. A variety of environmentally related chronic diseases are emerging among children due to their ongoing exposure to environmental contaminants. The most serious issue is diarrhea from water contamination, which proves fatal in

many cases. Over 50% of the country's water supply is contaminated because the infrastructure and water purification system were destroyed during the recent war. Upper respiratory tract disease from exposure to air contaminants is another significant concern. Additionally, many cases of cancer and congenital abnormalities among children are believed to be environmentally related. It is expected that the Environmental Health and Resource Centers established through the SBU-HEAD program will enable Iraqi specialists to study and prevent many of the environmental health problems currently facing children in Iraq. For more information, please visit the [conference/program web-site](#).

(15) International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety (INCHES)

Call for fact-sheets: INCHES received quite a few fact-sheets or links to fact-sheets on the internet. These fact-sheets are mainly in English. INCHES is calling members to send their available fact-sheets in other languages to be added to the database. They could be in any language, ranging from lead poisoning, asthma, allergies, chemical, ventilation at school, etc. INCHES is trying to build a very complete overview which we also share with the HECA network. Please [send an electronic version](#) or hard copy of the fact-sheets, as soon as possible, to the INCHES address: INCHES, P. O. Box 163, 6950 AD Dieren, the Netherlands. Please try not to postpone your assistance as we would like to have a very substantial database of factsheets available in the next month for everyone. More information on INCHES is available on the [network's web-site](#).

ARTICLES

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

[Indoor Air Quality Is a Top Health Risk](#) The Environmental Protection Agency has declared the air two to five times as polluted indoors than out, and placed it among the top five environmental risks to public health. According to the EPA, since 1980, the biggest increase in asthma cases has been in children under 5. Matthew Robb. [Washington Post](#). 8 April 2005.

[Pataki pushes for greener schools](#) Gov. Pataki plans to offer legislation that would force schools to use environmentally benign cleaning products, thereby helping to prevent indoor air pollution. "Parents deserve to know that their children are learning in an environment that is clean, safe and free of any unnecessary and potentially harmful chemicals". Rick Karlin. [Times Union](#). 18 April 2005.

[Study: Pollution Worse Inside School Buses Than Out](#) Children riding on school buses are breathing in more pollution than people standing out on the streets, researchers reported. "In a single day, a child riding a school bus will breathe in anywhere from 7 to 70 times more exhaust from that bus than a typical Los Angeles resident will inhale from all school bus emissions in the area." [Reuters](#). 5 April 2005.

[Pollution Risk Is Found on Diesel School Buses](#) Researchers calculate that in large urban areas, children riding in school buses with diesel engines collectively inhale more school bus exhaust than everyone else in the city combined. Exposure to the ultrafine diesel particulate matter, or D.P.M., is known to raise the risk for cancer. Nicholas Bakalar. [Registration required]. [New York Times](#). 26 April 2005.

[School Bus Pollution Examined](#) Pollution from school buses can turn up inside the buses, according to a study from L.A. in Environmental Science & Technology. Children are believed to be especially susceptible. As a major form of children's transportation, school bus emissions represent a potentially important source of children's exposure to pollution. Miranda Hitti. [Associated Press](#). 19 April 2005

[Polluted school buses](#) Diesel school buses are some of the biggest polluters on the road, and their exhaust isn't just going into the atmosphere. It's also making its way inside the buses. A new study shows that diesel fumes inhaled by children on L.A. buses are anywhere from 7 to 70 times more concentrated than those inhaled by an average L.A. resident on a typical day. [Press Telegram](#), California. 19 April 2005.

[Bus fumes worse for kids on board](#) Children riding buses in L.A. Unified School District inhale as much, or more, bus exhaust than the rest of the city, a new study has found. Diesel exhaust particles may contribute to numerous health problems, including cancer. "The current research is finding that it's not only an issue for the lungs but for the heart as well." Shari Roan. Los Angeles Times. 18 April 2005.

[Bus Pollution Sends Parents Into Panic](#) A new study has found that children riding on school buses are breathing in 7 to 70 times more pollution than people standing out on the streets. For elementary students whose respiratory systems are still developing, the problem is even more serious. They breathe at a faster rate than adults, so they're more susceptible. Channel Cincinnati. 7 April 2005.

[Hidden dangers on your child's bus](#) A new study shows children riding a school bus inhale up to 70 times more exhaust than people standing on a Los Angeles street corner. "You can definitely smell fumes on a school bus and when there are no windows open and no air conditioning, it's very harmful for children." ABC7 News. 6 April 2005.

(b) Outdoor air pollution

[Ambient Air Pollution and Pregnancy Outcomes: A Review of the Literature](#) A large number of studies have investigated the possible adverse effects of ambient air pollution on birth outcomes. We reviewed these, overall there is evidence implicating air pollution in adverse effects on different birth outcomes, but the strength of evidence differs. Radim Srám et al. Environmental Health Perspectives. 4 April 2005.

[Pollution affects 98% of Metro folk](#) Up to 98% of residents in Manila are affected by air pollution and 50% want to move to a less polluted place, according to the latest results released from an Asian air pollution survey. Air pollution is also having an impact upon people's emotional lives, with 62% of Manila residents worrying about the living environment for children. Philippine Star. 27 April 2005.

['Ease congestion through mass transit system'](#) Former High Court Judge Justice M.F. Saldanha said that a pediatrician once told him that 'air poisoning' in the city had touched such alarming levels that 42 percent of all new-borns need to be kept on respirators for a day or two. [Registration required]. Newindpress, India. 26 April 2005.

[Warning marks start of Chile's polluted winter](#) The government of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago lifted its pollution warning. But this warning could be the first of many this year: "Loosening restrictions on emissions, as the government plans to, will create a greater health risk for children with bronchitis and cause cancer and heart attacks in adults." Emily Byrne. Santiago Times, Chile. 19 April 2005.

[HK's Disneyland park to suffer 'constant haze'](#) Disneyland due to open in Hong Kong will "suffer from constant haze" because of worsening air pollution over Hong Kong and southern China. Worsening visibility is having an impact on public health and the economy. Some expatriate executives would like to move to Singapore for their children's health. Victor Mallet. Financial Times. 20 April 2005.

[Study: Smog effects cost state millions, harm children's lung growth](#) Smoggy air costs Californians over \$521 million a year in emergency room visits, hospital admissions and missed school days. If exposed during childhood, children could lose much of their lungs' functioning by the time they reach adulthood. Lungs are harmed for life by air pollution. Annette Wells. Daily Bulletin, California. 20 April 2005.

[Study links pollution to \\$521 million in health-care costs](#) California could prevent 3.3 million school absences and 4,000 asthma-related hospital admissions each year by adopting stricter air quality standards under consideration, according to an analysis by an environmental advocacy group. The pollution disproportionately affects children. Associated Press. ContraCosta Times, California. 21 April 2005.

[Clear savings in smog report](#) A report released before California considers new smog standards says adopting them would

save millions of dollars. It is a result of 1999's Children's Environmental Health Act, that directs the state to create new pollution standards that account for children as they are affected more than adults. [Registration required]. Eric Louie. [ContraCosta Times](#), California. 22 April 2005.

[Yearning to breathe free](#) With the nation's toughest smog standards, California air-quality officials are considering tightening ozone limits even more in response to new research on the pollutant's impact on children. Researchers found that children growing up in smoggy areas are more likely to develop asthma and to have underdeveloped lungs. Kerry Cavanaugh. [Press-Telegram](#), California. 20 April 2005.

[Smog Rule Tougher, but It's Symbolic](#) Targeting ozone, state regulators have passed the most strict air pollution standards in the country, but have no way to enforce them. California regulators approved the nation's toughest smog standard, citing new evidence that air pollution may be more harmful than scientists once believed, especially to children Miguel Bustillo. [Los Angeles Times](#). 29 April 2005.

[Dirty Air Poses Health Risks for 152 Million Americans](#) - More groups are at risk from air pollution and health risks are more serious than experts previously believed, according to the annual American Lung Association State of the Air: 2005 report. At-risk groups include children, seniors, those with asthma and lung diseases and those with cardiovascular diseases. [ENS](#). 28 April 2005.

[Analysis: Half of U.S. breathes dirty air](#) Adults 65 and older, children under 18, those with asthma, chronic bronchitis, lung disease, cardiovascular disease and diabetes are more at risk from air pollution, according to ALA's "State of the Air: 2005". 9 counties had ozone levels more than double the level considered safe for children to play outdoors on bad air days. Al Swanson. [UPI](#). 28 April 2005.

[Advocacy Group Reports Less Air Pollution](#) Fewer Americans have had to breathe unhealthy levels of smog or microscopic soot in recent years, but air pollution remained a threat. Most violations were for ground-level ozone, a precursor to smog that causes respiratory illnesses that can be especially harmful to the elderly, children and people with asthma. Ryan Pearson. [Associated Press](#). 28 April 2005.

[Valley air hits children hardest](#) Children pay a high price for the region's inability to clear its air of pollution. A study released today shows that children in the valley have: diminished lung capacity; increased susceptibility to asthma and many other chronic respiratory diseases; and the loss of months or even years from expected life spans. Michael G. Mooney. [Modesto Bee](#), California. 28 April 2005.

[Study: State's air quality dismal](#) Over 31.6 million Californians are breathing pollutants and smog, according to the American Lung Association. Poor air quality triggers asthma, increases premature deaths, induces heart attacks and strokes, causes lung cancer and puts children and the elderly, especially those with lung diseases, at risk. Marianne Love. [Pasadena Star News](#), California. 27 April 2005.

[Air pollution kills thousands a year, report says](#) Nearly 6,000 Canadians die each year from the effects of air pollution. Air pollutants can cause breathing difficulties, wheezing, coughing, and aggravation of existing respiratory and cardiac conditions. The elderly, children and people suffering from problems such as asthma appear to be most susceptible. Canadian Press. [Globe and Mail](#), Canada. 29 April 2005.

[Mayor takes city's air problems to the experts](#) Houston's Mayor on Saturday asked a team of scientific experts to help unravel the city's long-standing air pollution problems, and to provide, within a year, a "road map" to aid decisions on protecting public health. Among the team are medical doctors with specialties in childhood cancers and asthma. Dina Cappiello. [Houston Chronicle](#). 24 April 2005.

[New York to Pass Strict Rules on Emissions for City's Fleet](#) NY City Council is expected to approve a package of environmental bills intended to reduce the tailpipe emissions that contribute to cancer, heart disease and respiratory problems,

including asthma. The laws will help all New Yorkers, especially our children, breathe easier. [Purchase required]. Anthony DePalma. New York Times. 20 April 2005.

[Diesel pollution targeted](#) NY City Council will vote to choke off diesel pollution emitted by city-owned and contracted vehicles, including 6,000 school buses. Diesel pollution is a major cause of asthma rates among children that are as high as 25% in some neighborhoods. It is also linked with increased asthma attacks, bronchitis, cancer and emphysema. Frank Lombardi. New York Daily News. 20 April 2005.

[Buses equipped to cut pollution](#) An EPA grant is helping to cut down pollution by retrofitting nearly 300 diesel-fuel school buses. It helps cut down about a quarter of diesel-particle pollutants, which can worsen asthma and can cause lung damage. Researchers found that children riding school buses are exposed to high levels of diesel exhaust. Chuin-Wei Yap. Morning Sentinel, Maine. 7 April 2005.

[Air rules take aim at idling trucks, buses](#) Bus and truck drivers may have to cut off the air conditioning while they're parked, if officials succeed at creating rules to limit engine idling. The goal is to reduce the amount of air pollution in Middle Georgia, to achieve federal air standards and to reduce health risks for school children and other residents. S. Heather Duncan. Macon Telegraph, Georgia. 6 April 2005.

[SAD 31 seeks to limit bus emissions](#) SAD 31 transportation committee will find ways to limit students' exposure to a significant health hazard: respiratory problems caused by exposure to diesel bus exhaust. According to the EPA, diesel exhaust can cause asthma, bronchitis and other lung damage, including lung cancer, even at low levels. Nick Sambides. Bangor Daily News, Maine. 19 April 2005.

[The Invisible Danger](#) Munich is one of at least two German cities that has already exceeded the annual EU air pollution limits. At issue are the millions of tiny, invisible particles spewed into the air every day by cars, trucks, and factories. Ringo Mueller has filed suit against the city for the lousy air he has to breathe. He said it is on the behalf of "the mother with the small child". Spiegel, Germany. 6 April 2005.

(c) Asthma

[20pc children in country suffering from asthma](#) Asthma is on the rise in developing countries, with approximately 20% of children, in Pakistan alone, inflicted with the disease. There was no conclusive explanation for the increase, although house dust mites, pollution, smoking, industrial waste, change in dietary habits and the changing lifestyle could be some of the reasons. Dawn, Pakistan. 26 April 2005.

[Pulmonary Effects of Indoor- and Outdoor-Generated Particles in Children with Asthma](#) It is known that particulate matter (PM) air pollution is associated with both increased morbidity and mortality. A new study of children with asthma evaluates the differential health effect of particles generated outdoors from those generated indoors. Jane Q. Koenig et al. Environmental Health Perspectives. 4 April 2005.

(d) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking

[ETS and Conception: Smoking Out a Mechanism of Action](#) Studies have shown that women who smoke have a harder time getting pregnant and a greater risk of spontaneous abortion and having low-birth-weight babies. A study of Chinese women trying to conceive adds to the body of evidence that ETS exposure may hamper reproduction. Laura Alderson. Environmental Health Perspectives. 4 April 2005.

[Global Tobacco Treaty](#) The global battle against tobacco use and abuse took a historical turn recently with the formal adoption of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Exposure to tobacco smoke among children has been proved to cause respiratory diseases, middle ear disease, asthma attacks, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDs). Editorial. Daily Champion, Nigeria. 12 April 2005.

[U.S. Parents Exposing Children to Cigarette Smoke](#) Too many American parents are ignoring warnings and letting their children be exposed to cigarette smoke at home, in cars and in public places, a new report finds. Scientists have linked tobacco exposure to a variety of ailments in children, including asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia and middle-ear infections. Randy Dotiga. [HealthDay News](#). 4 April 2005.

[Many Parents Don't Set Secondhand Smoke Rules](#) Jennifer Warner. [WebMD Medical News](#). 4 April 2005.

[Limiting Children's Exposure to Tobacco Smoke, Many Parents Fail to Set Rules](#) [Medical News Today](#). 4 April 2005.

[Gran's smoking 'can cause asthma'](#) A woman who smokes during pregnancy could increase her grandchild's risk of developing asthma, researchers suggest. Children surveyed whose grandmothers smoked, but whose mothers did not, had double the normal risk of asthma. "The findings suggest that smoking could have a longer-lasting impact on families' health than we realised." [BBC News](#). 11 April 2005.

[Pregnant smokers increases grandkids' asthma risk](#) Gaia Vince. [NewScientist](#). 11 April 2005.

[Child's Asthma Linked to Grandmother's Habit](#) [Purchase required]. Nicholas Bakalar. [New York Times](#). 12 April 2005.

[Home smoking 'more deadly'](#) More than twice as many New Zealanders die from exposure to second-hand smoke in homes than in workplaces. Children and infants were more vulnerable to second-hand smoke than were adults. Exposure worsened asthma and led to lung damage, middle ear disease and behavioural problems. Colin Patterson. [Dominion Post](#), New Zealand. 18 April 2005.

(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General

[Governments Meet to Launch Global Campaign To Eliminate 12 Most Hazardous Chemicals](#) The Stockholm Convention will make its debut in May. The Convention targets chemicals that can kill people, damage the nervous and immune systems, cause cancer and reproductive disorders and interfere with normal infant and child development. Press Release. [UNEP](#). 26 April 2005.

[UN-backed meeting opens Monday on curbing world's most dangerous pollutants](#) As part of a UN-backed effort to rid the planet of some of the worst pollutants tied to cancer, birth defects and immune system damage, 800 government officials and observers from 130 countries will gather next week in Uruguay for the first meeting of the Stockholm Convention. Press Release. [UN](#). 27 April 2005.

[UN Meet to Seek Safer Ways to Kill Insect Pests](#) A UN meeting will seek new ways to kill mosquitoes and termites as part of a plan to bolster a ban on use of a "dirty dozen" toxic chemicals. Some pesticides are still in use to keep humanity's worst insect foes at bay even though they have been blamed for deaths, cancers or birth defects in humans and animals. Alister Doyle. [Reuters](#). 29 April 2005.

[NGOs Push For Fulfilment of Anti Pollution Promises](#) Organisations will be meeting to demand compliance with the Stockholm Convention on POPs and the expansion of its black list of banned chemicals. Exposure to POPs has been shown to increase the risk of cancer, hormonal imbalances, neurological disorders, infertility, diabetes, and a weakened immune system. Raul Pierri. [IPS News](#). 26 April 2005.

[EPA Revises Risk Guidelines](#) EPA released guidelines it will follow when assessing risks posed by carcinogenic chemicals. It issued a document addressing childhood cancer and cancer later in life for adults exposed to a carcinogen as children. It says children exposed to DNA-damaging chemicals have a greater risk of developing cancer. Cheryl Hogue. [Chemical & Engineering News](#). 4 April 2005.

[Environmental Groups Are Praising the E.P.A. for Updating Cancer-Risk Guidelines](#) EPA's new approach to assessing chemicals that might cause cancer won praise from environmental groups, taking into account, for the first time, the

likelihood that children may be more vulnerable to exposure than adults. [Registration required]. Michael Janofsky. [New York Times](#). 4 April 2005.

[Age-Related Differences in Susceptibility to Carcinogenesis](#) As part of its revision of cancer risk assessment guidelines, EPA proposed a 10-fold upward adjustment in the cancer potency for exposures to mutagenic carcinogens from birth to 2 and a 3-fold adjustment for exposures between 3 and 15. Dale Hattis/Robert Goble/Margaret Chu. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). 4 April 2005.

[Prenatal PAH Exposure Causes Genetic Changes in Newborns](#) Research has suggested that *in utero* exposure to pollutants can cause DNA damage, chromosomal changes, and increased risk of childhood cancers. A study demonstrates that prenatal exposure to PAHs causes chromosomal changes linked to leukemia and other cancers. Jerry Phelps. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). 4 April 2005.

[Children 'being born with toxins'](#) The National Toxic Network (NTN) marked Earth Day today with the plea for more awareness about chemicals entering children's bodies. A NTN coordinator said the World Health Organisation (WHO) had estimated about three million children under the age of five died every year as a result of environmental hazards. [Herald Sun](#), Australia. 21 April 2005.

[Govt urged to act over toxin threat](#) Activists have urged the government to better protect children from chemical threats and contamination. The National Toxic Network marked Earth Day with the plea for more awareness about chemicals entering children's bodies, and the three million children under the age of five that die every year as a result of environmental hazards. [AAP](#), Australia.. 22 April 2005.

[Chemical Stew? What's a Body to Do?](#) A bill calls for voluntary testing as a first step in determining links between disease and the chemicals we're exposed to every day. "The fetus is more susceptible to many of the environmental toxins, because the system is still developing and actively growing, and it's more easily disrupted by environmental exposures." Steve Lopez. [Los Angeles Times](#). 13 April 2005.

[Pollutant affects sex chromosome](#) An environmental pollutant can change the ratio of sperm carrying male and female chromosomes, a study says. Researchers found exposure to a class of pollutants which are a by-product of industrial and agricultural processes increased the Y chromosome sperms. [BBC News](#). 27 April 2005.

[Chemical Hazards](#) Actions to protect children against chemical hazards: safe storage, child-resistant packaging, clear labeling of chemical products; incorporate the teaching of chemical safety and health into school curricula; avoid the construction of homes, schools and playgrounds near polluted areas; promote "poison-control" educational campaigns etc. [Webhealthcenter](#), hindustantimes, India. April 2005.

[A rising acid tide](#) Polluted water from certain mines started to decant onto the surface and into rocks below, with potentially devastating consequences for the environment and the health of humans and animals. High nitrate levels in the water cause oxygen deprivation, which can cause spontaneous abortions, still births and infant mortalities. Melissa Fourie. [Mail & Guardian](#), South Africa. 12 April 2005.

[Tiny, poor Albania has huge clean-up problem](#) Albania is littered with abandoned communist-era industrial enterprises that are home to squatters, even though the soil, water, and building surfaces are poisoned. Clouds of smoke, laden with dioxins and heavy metals, drift over neighborhoods, where parents no longer allow their children to play outside. Colin Woodward. [Grist Magazine](#). 15 April 2005.

[Amazon Pollution: Victims of 'Toxico'](#) It is a disaster that has left the jungle ravaged and its people dying of cancer. "Seventy-five per cent of the children here have skin problems... Plenty of others have skin or respiratory problems. Some of them lose their hair. We've had 12 people here die of cancer." [Purchase required]. [The Independent](#), London. 27 April 2005.

[Behind the Cadmium Poisoning of Guangdong Laborers](#) Guangdong attracts more than a million workers from China's poor

regions annually. To survive, they leave their families and work away from home, taking jobs that involve intensive labor or work in dangerous environments. For many, cadmium exposures exceed standards for workers and their children. Gu Qinger. Epoch Times. 7 April 2005.

[Chemical present in clear plastics can impair learning and cause disease](#) Low doses of the environmental contaminant bisphenol-A (BPA), widely used to make many plastics found in food storage containers, including feeding bottles for infants, can impair brain function, leading to learning disabilities and age-related neurodegenerative diseases, according to researchers. Medical News Today. 13 April 2005.

[Study Cites Risk of Compound in Plastic Bottles](#) A chemical in plastic that is one of the world's most widely used industrial compounds, may be risky in the small amounts that seep from bottles and food packaging, according to a report. Marla Cone. Los Angeles Times. 13 April 2005.

[Compounds in plastic packaging act as environmental estrogens altering breast genes](#) Compounds found in plastic products used to wrap or contain food and beverages, including baby bottles, have aroused concerns as possible cancer-causing agents. Medical News Today. 19 April 2005.

[When plastic is a threat](#) A report sent to EPA detailed studies of BPA, which is one of the world's most widely used industrial compounds in plastics products. BPA apparently mimics human sex hormones, adversely affecting both men and women, but especially infants. Studies suggest BPA inhibits cell growth and may contribute to hyperactivity in the very young. Santa Maria Times, California. 28 April 2005.

[Canadian Inuit woman wins UN environmental award](#) The leader of an Inuit organization is to receive a UN award for her work in promoting the Stockholm Convention, an international treaty that limited the use of POPs, which include carcinogens such as dioxins and furans, tend to concentrate in the Arctic and have been found at elevated levels in the breast milk of Inuit mothers. Canadian Press. 19 April 2005.

[California Town's Water Tainted by Perchlorate; 36 States Face Contamination](#) Rialto is facing an emerging threat of a chemical used in rocket fuel and defense manufacturing that has befouled nearly half its drinking water. High amounts of perchlorate can be dangerous, interrupting thyroid hormones, which are needed for pre- and postnatal development. Erica Werner. Associated Press. 25 April 2005.

[Lettuce](#) "Oh, it's totally shocking - rocket fuel in lettuce? How is that possible?" "We're really looking at protecting pregnant women, newborns, young children..." says Kevin Mayer with EPA. It wants to protect them from Perchlorate - the explosive component in rocket fuel. News Channel 5, KPHO, Arizona. 29 April 2005.

[Arsenic in the playground](#) Arsenic treated wood has been used for years for decking and playground equipment, and it's commonly found in playgrounds. Small children may put their hands in their mouths after touching the timber, and as many playgrounds are constructed using treated timber, local shires are considering the alternatives. Jo Spargo & Amelia Chappelow. ABC, Australia. 5 April 2005.

[Backyard Safety](#) Playground equipment, water and poisons can create hazards for child safety. Make sure there are no cleaning products, chemicals, pesticides, or other dangerous items out while children are playing. And some pressure-treated wood contains arsenic and poses an increased risk in cancer in children who eat or play on this type of wood. Family First. 13 April 2005.

[Are your children's playgrounds toxic?](#) As children play in parks and playgrounds, they could be in direct contact with the preservative CCA, a form of arsenic which we know is poisonous. CCA-treated wood that little children with hand-to-mouth characteristics touch, are considered a serious health concern. Amado de Jesus. Philippine Daily Inquirer. 23 April 2005.

[Toxics More Valuable Than Democracy?](#) Recently, three farm-worker families in a neighborhood of Immokalee gave birth to

severely deformed children. More infants than we care to acknowledge are being denied the fundamental liberties asserted by our democracy because of the exposure of the fetus to toxic chemicals. Alan Farago. [Orlando Sentinel](#). Florida. 12 April 2005.

[Kids' cancer cluster action group upset by lack of Ciba representation](#) With no representatives from Ciba Specialty Chemicals Corp. and United Water Toms River in attendance, members of the Citizens Action Committee on Childhood Cancer Cluster were more than a bit annoyed. "One of the biggest concerns is the impact on the water system." Jean Mikle. [Asbury Park Press](#), New Jersey. 19 April 2005.

[Bills seek crackdown on chemicals in cosmetics](#) Lawmakers will begin hearings on several bills to crack down on potentially harmful chemicals in cosmetics and children's toys. Backing the measures are a coalition of environmental and health groups, which claim the ingredients have been linked to birth defects. [Registration required]. Sandy Kleffman. [ContraCosta Times](#), California. 19 April 2005.

[Cosmetics ingredients scrutinized](#) FDA is investigating whether the chemicals that make shampoos fragrant and nail polish chip-resistant are hazardous to your health. Studies on animals have shown the chemicals could harm reproductive organs or cause other health concerns, including early puberty in girls. [Registration required]. David Goldstein. [Kansas City Star](#). 18 April 2005.

(b) Lead

[Children get lead poisoning from U.S.-run smelter in Peru](#) A study released in March showed that 99.9% of children 6 and younger in La Oroya Antigua, the neighborhood closest to the Doe Run lead smelter, have a level of lead in their blood well above the international standard for poisoning. [Registration required]. Marina Walker Guevara. [Miami Herald](#). 25 April 2005.

[Doe Run smelter in Peru poisons kids, study finds](#) Nearly every young child living near Doe Run's lead smelter in Peru is lead poisoned, according to a study by the Peruvian government. Lead is a potent neurological poison that causes lowered IQ and behavioral problems. 9% had levels so high they will be hospitalized or removed from the community. Sara Shipley. [St Louis Post-Dispatch](#). 10 April 2005.

[Lead and let die](#) Lead is so common because it has been such a useful metal in many ways. But lead is also very dangerous. Generally, children are the most vulnerable to lead poisoning: "Even small amounts of lead can harm a child's brain, kidneys and stomach. Lead poisoning can slow a child's development and cause learning and behavior problems." Henrylito D. Tacio. [Sun Star](#), Philippines. 11 April 2005.

[Unleaded Fuel Usage Still Low](#) Motorists are shunning unleaded fuel despite campaigns to popularize it. Yet a recent study by UNEP warned that respiratory diseases could become a major cause of deaths in Kenya if the use of leaded fuel was not phased out. Lead reduces the IQ of children if taken in large quantities. Jeff Otieno. [The Nation](#), Kenya. 26 April 2005.

[Leaded Fuel Deadline Queried](#) The Government plans to ensure that all vehicles in the country use unleaded fuel by the end of the year are unlikely to succeed. The use of leaded fuel posed many dangers not only to human life, but also to the environment. The Kenya Institute of Education was urged to introduce environment studies at the primary school level Patrick Mayoyo. [The Nation](#), Kenya. 28 April 2005.

[Government to Control Fuel Prices](#) The government of the Gambia intends to phase-out lead from fuel by 2006, by controlling imports and prices of petrol and diesel. Leaded gasoline has been identified as a potential source of serious health problems, affecting the mental and physical development of children. Pa Modou Secka. [The Independent](#), Gambia. 11 April 2005.

[Kosovo: Poisoned camps for the Gypsies](#) The UN Mission in Kosovo is ignoring, or covering up, a medical tragedy there for which it is directly responsible. At 3 camps built by UNHCR, some 60 Gypsy children under the age of 6 have been exposed

to such high levels of lead that they are highly likely either to die or suffer irreversible brain damage. Paul Polansky. [International Herald Tribune](#). 26 April 2005.

[Attorney Generals Protest EPA Lead Paint Reversal by Johnson](#) State attorney generals are objecting to a decision by Acting Administrator of EPA to abandon proposed rules protecting urban children from the hazards of lead-based paint. NY's children have unhealthy levels of lead in their blood at twice the national average. Press Release. [Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility](#). 12 April 2005.

[High-risk Boston neighborhoods targeted in lead safety campaign](#) Advocates seeking to limit children's exposure to harmful lead in their homes are targeting city neighborhoods that repeatedly have the highest incidence of lead poisoning in Boston. Children are most commonly exposed to lead by ingesting lead-based paint chips or breathing in dust from renovations. [Associated Press](#). 18 April 2005.

[Lead poisoning scare hits home in Hub neighborhood](#) Advocates have declared war on a pocket of the city in Dorchester where children suffer from lead poisoning at three times the rate of anywhere else in Boston. More than 10 percent of the kids who live in the area have lead poisoning. Jessica Fargen. [Boston Herald](#). 18 April 2005.

[City's core battles blight, lead's lethal sting](#) Children are at the greatest risk from environmental health hazards, and an estimated 900 to 1,000 city children are poisoned by lead every year: "lead is the No. 1 environmental health issue for kids." Corydon Ireland. [Democrat & Chronicle](#), New York. 22 April 2005.

[Dangers of lead paint pervasive](#) During the renovation of their French Street home last year, Wilson's young children were exposed to enough toxic dust from old lead paint to affect their physical, mental and neurological development, perhaps permanently. Wilson has become a reluctant de facto lead poisoning expert, [Bangor Daily News](#), Maine. 22 April 2005.

[Bills would expand lead-hazards efforts](#) Holly worries her toddlers will have a hard time learning because they were exposed to dust from lead paint as infants. She supports a bill that would give more money to teach parents and contractors about the hazards posed by lead paint. I'm frustrated and very angry my kids were poisoned by this. Susan M. Cover. [Kennebec Journal](#), Maine. 27 April 2005.

[Mother pushes for warnings on dangers of lead](#) Sandra Roseberry never suspected that her baby's crying or sensitivity to noises might have anything to do with the dust in the old house she was renovating. Then, a routine exam showed that her 10-month-old and 2-year-old daughters had severe lead poisoning. John Richardson. [Portland Press Herald](#), Maine. 26 April 2005.

[County faces lead legacy](#) An average of 100 children per year are being diagnosed with lead poisoning in St. Joseph county, with only 10% of the most at-risk population, age 6 and younger, being tested. CDC says every child in the county faces the risk of lead poisoning, because of where they live or spend their time. [Subscription required]. John Dobberstein. [SouthBend Tribune](#), Indiana. 24 April 2005.

[DEM offers new program for removal of lead paint](#) Department of Environmental Management will offer voluntary self-certification program for contractors who perform external lead paint removal. "The risk of exposure from external lead paint, especially lead paint removal, is just as hazardous to children as interior lead paint if removed improperly." David Casey. [Pawtucket Times](#), New England. 21 April 2005.

[More lead poisoning alleged in Kinston](#) Another lawsuit filed this month is the latest in a string of lead poisoning accusations involving children. The suit alleges that three children, now ages 13, 10 and 9, suffered "grave and severe injuries" after exposure to lead-based paint in two different Kinston properties in the early to mid 1990s. Mark Lineberger. [Kinston Free Press](#), North Carolina. 20 April 2005.

[Could 'Toxic Table Wear' Be In Your Kitchen?](#) A mother of two small children, she was alarmed to hear that the plates and

glasses she uses to feed her kids could be contaminated with lead. According to the Texas Department of Health, lead poisoning is a major environmental health problem and kids are more at risk. [News Channel 11, KCBD, Texas](#). 28 April 2005.

[Lead Found In Jewelry Sold In Local Stores](#) The group "Environmental Rochesterians Against the Misuses of Pesticides" bought several items recently in local stores, and all but one of the seven products tested positive for lead. Lead exposure can cause brain and nerve damage in young children. [WROC-TV, New York](#). 11 April 2005.

[Group: Disney jewelry has lead](#) Children's jewelry sold by The Walt Disney Co. contains dangerously toxic levels of lead, an environmental group charged. The Center for Environmental Health threatened legal action if it doesn't pull the toys from retail stores and Disneyland shops, alleging the jewelry could pose health hazards to children who put them in their mouths. [Daily News, Los Angeles](#). 13 April 2005.

[Lead concern in Disney jewelry](#) A Disney-brand bracelet and other children's jewelry purchased at Disneyland contain dangerously high levels of lead according to an Oakland-based environmental group's report being released today. Lead, a potent neurotoxin, is particularly harmful to young children and fetuses. Douglas Fischer. [Oakland Tribune, California](#). 12 April 2005.

(c) Pesticides

[Assessing Exposure to Organophosphorus Pesticides by Biomonitoring in Epidemiologic Studies of Birth Outcomes](#) 3 studies recently evaluated the relation between exposure of pregnant women to organophosphorus pesticides and several birth outcomes. They found significant relations between exposure and birth outcomes. Larry L. Needham. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). 4 April 2005.

[Variation in Organophosphate Pesticide Metabolites in Urine of Children Living in Agricultural Communities](#) Children of migrant farm-workers are at increased risk of exposure to pesticides because of carry-home transport processes and residential location. Although this is recognized, few reports describe the extent of exposure. William Lambert et al. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). 4 April 2005.

[Honduran Farm Workers Sue Companies Over Pesticide](#) Honduran banana pickers are suing some of the world's biggest fruit growers and chemical manufacturers, claiming they used "DBCP ... a highly toxic and poisonous pesticide which has been alleged to cause sterility, testicular atrophy, miscarriages ... liver damage and various forms of cancer in humans." Nichola Groom. [Planet Ark](#). 18 April 2005.

[Aerial pesticide spraying poisoning people](#) According to studies children living near agricultural operations are at high risk of adverse effects from airborne toxicants. Legislation asks for protective laws such as buffer zones around schools and a registry for people who are sensitive, including asthmatic children. [Registration required]. Murray Hudson. [Memphis Commercial Appeal, Tennessee](#). 18 April 2005.

[Pesticide battles on the rise in the USA](#) Americans are finding themselves in the path of airborne pesticides drifting from farm spraying as rapidly growing suburbs expand into cropland. Parents worry that the chemical drifts and makes kids sick. Sparking efforts to reduce the dangers of dozens of chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects, infertility and neurological illnesses. John Ritter. [USA Today](#). 12 April 2005.

[Uganda: Anti-DDT Lobby Could Slow Fight against Malaria, Minister Says](#) Environmentalists against DDT could harm efforts to eradicate malaria in Uganda, the minister of health said. "DDT has been proven, over and over again, to be the most effective and least expensive method of fighting malaria." In Uganda, malaria kills between 70,000 and 110,000 children every year. [UNIRIN](#). 25 April 2005.

[Old culprit hits birds - maybe people](#) DDT continues to show up in alarming levels in non-migrating songbirds. A major reason scientists worry about DDT and other organochlorines is that they are powerful endocrine disruptors that can, even in

tiny amounts in the body, interfere with embryo development and harm reproduction. Mark Clayton. [Christian Science Monitor](#). 14 April 2005.

[The legacy of Agent Orange](#) The Vietnamese believe that the powerful weed killer - the use of which was intended to destroy crops and jungle providing cover for the Vietcong - is responsible for massively high instances of genetic defects in areas that were sprayed. "My first child has just died - he had physical deformities. The second one is having headaches like me." [BBC](#). 29 April 2005.

[Vietnam still suffers from Agent Orange exposure](#) Dixon remaining in forests, fields, swamps may be 4 times higher today than previous estimates. This is her fourth child. Unable to see, hear or speak, he is the most severely disabled of the 3 children she believes are victims of Agent Orange, the poison that rained out of Vietnamese skies more than four decades ago. Jill Schensul. [Knight Ridder](#). 29 April 2005.

[U.S. Senate approves Johnson to head EPA](#) The U.S. Senate approved Stephen Johnson to be the head of EPA, the first professional scientist to lead the agency. Johnson had faced opposition when two Democrats said they would delay the confirmation in a dispute over a program to test the effects of pesticides on small children. He scrapped that program. [Reuters](#). 29 April 2005.

[To Avoid Losing Top EPA Job, Johnson Drops Kids Pesticide Study](#) A study planned by EPA that would pay parents to test their children's reaction to pesticides nearly proved to be a stumbling block. "The government should not be asking families to turn their babies into guinea pigs. They should be protecting children, not exposing them to pesticides". [Environment News Service](#). 11 April 2005.

[EPA Cancels Proposed Study that Would Have Exposed Children to Pesticides](#) EPA canceled a controversial study using children to measure the effect of pesticides after Democrats said they would block Senate confirmation of the agency's new head. The aim was to fill data gaps on children's exposure to household pesticides and chemicals. John Heilprin. [Environmental News Network](#). 11 April 2005.

[Blocked Again](#) On a range of issues EPA has been asked to manipulate scientific evidence or, to withhold such evidence for political ends. Senators held up the nomination until Mr. Johnson agreed to end a nutty experiment under which EPA essentially paid parents to allow monitoring of their children's exposure to dangerous pesticides. [Purchase required]. Editorial. [New York Times](#). 20 April 2005.

[Using Children As Guinea Pigs?](#) Last week, the EPA canceled a proposed study of the effects of pesticides on very young children. The families involved had to be using pesticides, and agreed to continue their use. "The government should not be asking families to turn their babies into guinea pigs. They should be protecting children, not exposing them to pesticides." [The Ledger](#), Florida. 19 April 2005.

[Ghouls working at EPA](#) The EPA Children's Environmental Exposure Research Study (CHEERS), to determine the effects of pesticides on infants, triggered outrage in Congress and was cancelled last week. Not because of any ethical awakening about the cruelty of the study, but because he feared he wouldn't be confirmed as head of EPA. Pat Murphy. [Idaho Mountain Express](#). 13 April 2005.

[Two U.S. Senators Block EPA Chief Nomination](#) Two Democratic senators said they would block the nomination of Stephen Johnson to head the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency until the EPA cancels a program to test pesticide exposure of children in a Florida county. "Testing pesticides on small children and infants is wrong. We already know it's bad for them." [Reuters](#). 8 April 2005.

[Confirmation of EPA, FDA Heads Stalled Senate](#) Democrats said they were placing parliamentary holds on the confirmation of Stephen Johnson as EPA administrator as he had not canceled a controversial program that would pay families to videotape the effect of pesticide exposure on infants through routine spraying in their homes. Warren Vieth & Ricardo

Alonso-Zaldivar. [Los Angeles Times](#). 7 April 2005.

[The Worst of the Bad Nominees](#) Senators from California and Florida are threatening to stall Mr. Johnson's confirmation as head of the EPA unless he ends a suspended Florida study in which families would be paid to allow researchers to study the effects of pesticides on their children, a macabre investigation co-sponsored by the American Chemistry Council. Editorial. [New York Times](#). 8 April 2005.

[Gross Politics](#) Democrat Senators have placed holds on Johnson's nomination as EPA administrator as they objected to a controversial EPA study of the risks posed to children by household pesticides. EPA is required under federal law to assess the risks certain chemicals pose to children, and yet there is little reliable data on current childhood exposure. Jonathan Adler. [National Review](#). 26 April 2005.

[Nominee Is Grilled Over Program on Pesticides](#) Stephen Johnson encountered turbulence at his Senate confirmation hearing as Senator Boxer threatened to hold up his nomination over a controversial pesticide program in Florida. "This program is the worst kind of thing; it's environmental injustice where children are the victims." [Purchase required]. Michael Janofsky. [New York Times](#). 7 April 2005.

[Science, Ethics and a Stalled Nomination](#) An EPA study of how infants and toddlers are exposed to and affected by pesticides and chemicals in their homes is being used by Democrats to stall the nomination of EPA's next administrator. "I'm going to stand up for the health and safety of children in my state." [Purchase required]. Felicity Barringer & Kenneth Chang. [New York Times](#). 8 April 2005.

[Two Senators Vow to Block Nomination of EPA Chief](#) Two Democratic senators said they will block the nomination of Stephen L. Johnson to head the Environmental Protection Agency until the EPA cancels a program to test pesticide exposure of children in a Florida county. Sens. Bill Nelson of Florida and Barbara Boxer of California said the testing program is unfair. [Washington Post](#). 8 April 2005.

[EPA Balks at Halting Pesticide-Child Study](#) EPA won't rush to cancel a study on how pesticides affect children despite threats from Senate Democrats to hold up confirmation of the new EPA administrator. EPA had planned to give participating families \$970, but critics said that might encourage low-income families to use pesticides in their homes. John Heilprin. [Associated Press](#). 7 April 2005.

[CON: Risks outweigh the rewards](#) Pouring pesticides on your lawn just doesn't make sense to an environmental studies professor. Science proves there are long-term health impacts to pesticide use, including the risk of leukemia. Plus, the endocrine disrupting chemicals in pesticides can alter "what makes boys boys and girls girls." [Purchase required]. Geoff Matthews. [Ottawa Sun](#). 17 April 2005.

[You are what you eat](#) As evidence mounts that we need to take a good look at what we're putting in our bodies, organic foods have become the fastest-growing sector of America's food industry. People have turned to organics as a preventative measure. I'm convinced that eating organically works not only for infertility, but cancer and other diseases. Barbara Rolek. [Northwest Indiana Times](#). 25 April 2005.

(d) Mercury

[Japan ups aid to mercury-poisoning victims after decades of legal battles](#) Japan's government has announced a new relief program for thousands of people who suffered mercury poisoning from industrial pollutants, nearly half a century it was first recognized. Minamata disease paralyzes the central nervous system causing birth defects and, in extreme cases, death. [Agence France-Presse](#). 7 April 2005.

[Mercury rules leave IQs behind](#) Every year an estimated 300,000 to 600,000 children are born in the US with lower IQs because of exposure to mercury pollution. Those figures, from the National Institutes of Health, are startling enough in terms

of human suffering. Add to this that the damage to children translates into \$8.7 billion in lost earnings each year. Daryl Lease. Herald Tribune, Florida. 4 April 2005.

[Earth Mothers on Patrol](#) Mercury is a nasty neurotoxin that in recent years has become the bane of pregnant women because of its accumulation in popular fish. As with lead, adults can process an impressive amount of mercury before major damage is done. Not so fetuses. The Government has warned pregnant women against eating more than 6oz. of albacore tuna a week. Michelle Cottle. Time. 18 April 2005.

[Early warning sign of methylmercury poisoning](#) A study of wild river otters has found that above a certain threshold, methylmercury poisoning causes lesions in specific regions of adult mammals' brains. In developing fetuses, the effects are even more severe. Brain lesions are more widespread, and development of the central nervous system is disrupted. Environmental Science & Technology. 20 April 2005.

[EPA in a hot spot over mercury pollution](#) Unused report had much higher estimate of benefits to curbs. An internal EPA report estimates the Southeast alone could reap up to \$2 billion a year. Mercury concentrations accumulate in fish, posing the greatest risk of nerve damage to pregnant women, women of childbearing ages and young children. Associated Press. MSNBC. 29 April 2005.

[Retrograde on Mercury](#) One reason the federal government should take the strongest possible action to stop mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants is that this nerve poison accumulates dangerously in fish, a food that is otherwise such a healthful source of protein. 9 States have sued the EPA for failing to protect expectant mothers and children. Editorial. Boston Globe. 1 April 2005.

[Mercury emissions plan insufficient](#) The National Wildlife Federation has said that the Bush administration has "crafted a mercury rule that puts the interests of industry above the health of future generations." Mercury is proven to cause nerve damage to fetuses and young children. Connecticut Post. 7 April 2005.

[Is the EPA Low-balling the Mercury Risk?](#) EPA recently issued rules to reduce the amount of mercury released into the atmosphere from U.S. coal-burning power plants. Critics say EPA minimized the benefits of reductions. Mercury emissions make their way into the fish we eat and have been linked to cognitive impairment in children. James K. Hammitt. Los Angeles Times. 13 April 2005.

[Northeast battles its status as US 'tailpipe'](#) Concerned about mercury levels, states sue the EPA and consider creating tough new standards of their own. New Jersey and eight other states filed a lawsuit against the federal government contending that new rules fail to protect children and pregnant women from toxins released into the air. Sara B. Miller Christian Science Monitor. 1 April 2005.

[10 states suing over mercury regulations](#) Wisconsin has joined a list of states suing the federal government's environmental policies, challenging new regulations they say fail to protect children and expectant mothers from dangers posed by mercury emissions. The governor said mercury seriously threatens women of childbearing age, pregnant women and young children. Associated Press. 12 April 2005.

[Silent on mercury threat](#) Florida is notably absent from a list of states challenging the federal government's recently announced mercury rules. This debate has serious, long-term consequences. The National Institutes of Health have estimated that, each year in our country, 300,000 to 600,000 children are born with diminished IQs because of exposure to mercury. Herald Tribune, Florida. 19 April 2005.

[Thinking straight on mercury case](#) Massachusetts has joined other states in suing to overturn, as not tough enough, EPA's regulations on mercury emissions. The line is that 630,000 mothers are exposing their unborn children to mercury through fish they eat, but there is no evidence that anybody is exposed to harmful doses from power plants. [Purchase required]. Editorial. Boston Herald. 10 April 2005.

[U.S. Senator Tom Carper vows to filibuster EPA vote](#) In 2003, citing the high number of infants with unsafe levels of mercury in their blood, 45 senators called on the EPA and the Bush administration to withdraw the proposed mercury rule for being too weak. Jim Cresson. Cape Gazette, Delaware. 22 April 2005.

[House panel passes mercury control bill](#) A bill to reduce mercury contamination in the environment was unanimously approved by the House Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources Committee. Mercury is a toxin which persists in the environment, and accumulates in fish, animals and people. It is particularly damaging to fetuses and young children. Louis Porter. Times Argus, Vermont. 13 April 2005.

[Polluter of the Potomac](#) Nearly a year ago, the EPA and the Food and Drug Administration issued public warnings about the danger of eating fish with high levels of mercury, yet now the EPA is undercutting efforts to keep high levels of mercury out of our air and water. Pregnant women and children are especially vulnerable to mercury contamination. Jim Moran. Washington Post. 17 April 2005.

[Certain fish remain under eating advisory because of mercury](#) Officials warn that pregnant women, women planning to become pregnant, infants and children should not eat any fish containing mercury. [Subscription required]. The Times and Democrat, South Carolina. 7 April 2005.

[Caution Urged in Eating Fish From Adirondacks and Catskills](#) Officials urged that children and women of child-bearing years avoid eating a half-dozen species of fish. The fish are feared to be contaminated with mercury, which may harm the nervous systems and organs of fetuses, newborns and young children. [Purchase required]. Lisa W. Foderaro. New York Times. 16 April 2005.

[Lawmakers part with locks of hair - all in the name of science](#) To raise awareness of mercury, particularly from coal-fired power plants, the Sierra Club invited lawmakers to participate in a nationwide clinical study. Last year, the EPA found that one in six women of childbearing age has elevated levels of mercury in her blood. Rebecca T. Dickson. Concord Monitor, New Hampshire. 21 April 2005.

[Scientists find higher mercury dose in vaccines](#) A mercury-laced preservative once added to pediatric vaccines exposes infants' brains to twice the neurotoxin previously suspected, offering evidence that guidelines may underestimate the risk newborns face. "We're talking about a low-level delivery of a toxin given to a baby on the first day of life." Douglas Fischer. Oakland Tribune, California. 21 April 2005.

[Parents deserve data about vaccines](#) Mercury is a toxin and exposure should be minimized, yet mercury can be found in some vaccines routinely administered. When combined with mercury from other sources, such as fish, the added mercury from vaccines may lead to toxic levels in the bloodstreams and organs particularly of children. Sen. Philip Bartlett. Portland Press Herald, Maine. 5 April 2005.

[Vaccination bill passes committee](#) After several changes, the House Health Care Policy Committee on Wednesday brought mercury-free vaccinations one step closer to law. Clark said abundant research indicates immunizations containing mercury can poison children and potentially cause autism. Elizabeth Baird. Columbia Missourian. 29 April 2005.

[Parents lobby against mercury](#) The weight of evidence shows no linkage between thimerosal and autism, according to a 2004 report by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. But those reports didn't stop some parents of autistic children from pressing this year for a ban on vaccines containing thimerosal in Minnesota. Pat Doyle. Star Tribune, Minneapolis. 19 April 2005.

[New Study Shows Vaccine Mercury Results in More Than Twice as Much Mercury Being Trapped in the Brain](#); Safe Minds Recommends Additional Research. "These new findings undermine the position of vaccine makers, who have long denied harm from exposing a generation of children to excessive levels of mercury as a needless additive in vaccines." U.S

NewsWire. 21 April 2005.

[Mercury in Vaccines Different, Study Shows](#) The mercury contained in some vaccines is processed differently in the body and is possibly less toxic to children than mercury found in pollution and fish, researchers reported. The Institute of Medicine said there is no evidence of a link between vaccines and autism. This has enraged autism activists, who fear a cover-up. Maggie Fox. Reuters. 21 April 2005.

[Doubt cast over jab mercury risks](#) The debate linking the use of thimerosal in vaccines to autism and other disorders has led families to question whether the potential risks associated with early childhood immunisations may outweigh the benefits. But a study found thimerosal is less toxic than the mercury found in fish and pollution, and may be less dangerous than widely claimed. BBC News. 22 April 2005.

[Study Shows Ethylmercury Used in Vaccines Ends Up in the Brain of Primates](#); Environmental Journal Puts Happy Spin on Results Says National Autism Association. "When people who can help turn a blind-eye to children injured by Thimerosal, it only adds to the heartache our children endure each and every day," says the Executive Director of the National Autism Association. NewsWire. 21 April 2005.

[All-out effort on autism](#) The number of cases of autism has grown by 172% since 1990. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development is calling together scientists, toxicologists, immunologists, neurologists, psychiatrists and public health specialists to track down triggers. The debate over whether mercury plays a role is unsettled. Jamie Talan. Newsday, New York. 19 April 2005.

[The Age of Autism: Sick children](#) Dr. Elizabeth Mumper says that about a decade ago she began noticing a change for the worse in the overall health of the children she was seeing, including a startling rise in cases of autism. The Autism Research Institute, a group that suspects mercury is implicated in an alarming increase in childhood disorders. Dan Olmsted. United Press International. 28 April 2005.

[Generation Hg? Is Autism puzzle solved?](#) 20 years ago, autism affected fewer than 1 in 2,000 children; now CDC estimates it's 1 in every 166. An increasing number of families, physicians, scientists, and some in Congress point to a growing body of evidence linking mercury toxicity with otherwise unexplained disorders like autism. Coy Barefoot & Alison Bell. The Hook, Virginia. 7 April 2005.

[Parents of autistic children lobby legislators for help](#) The Legislature is considering several bills to aid research into autism, and includes a bill that would reduce the quantity of mercury in the environment by removing mercury switches from vehicles before they are scrapped. Proponents say mercury may be a factor in autism. Kirsten Singleton. Journal Star, Illinois. 7 April 2005.

[Schools get mercury-spill guidelines](#) Mercury spills at Kentucky schools in recent months have prompted three state agencies to issue a set of guidelines on how teachers and administrators should handle them. Guidelines will help them know how to respond to a mercury spill and make them more aware of the health risks mercury poses. James Bruggers. The Courier-Journal, Kentucky. 19 April 2005.

(e) Fire retardants

[Fire retardant a health risk](#) Toxic anti-fire chemicals are seeping into breast milk in Australia at levels 5 times higher than in Europe. Children under 4 have the highest levels of PBDEs of the population, which is very disturbing when you think about a small child, their bodies, their immune systems, their detoxification systems – all are still developing." Paul Osborne. The Australian. 12 April 2005.

[Tests show toxic threat](#) Plastics are treated with flame-retardant chemicals to reduce the risk of fire. There is growing evidence that these chemicals are rapidly building up in the bodies of people and animals, with potentially harmful

consequences for the development of babies. Tests on breast milk and some food show alarming levels of these contaminants. [ABC News, Australia](#). 13 April 2005.

(3) WATER AND SANITATION

[5 m die due to waterborne diseases: UN](#) An estimated 5 million people die in developing countries every year prematurely from waterborne diseases and exposure to pollution caused by stove smoke inside their homes, according to UN data. Acute respiratory infections in children and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in women is common in poor countries. [Financial Express, India](#). 21 April 2005.

[Government ministers meet to decide policies needed to reach goals and targets on water, sanitation and slums](#) CSD's 13th session will focus on water, sanitation and human settlements, issues which encapsulate the silent humanitarian crisis-roughly 4 thousand children die each day of diarrheal diseases due to poor sanitation and contaminated drinking water. Press Release. [United Nations](#). 11 April 2005.

[Sustainable Development Commission Focus Water, Sanitation, Housing](#) Ministers will decide on policies and practical measures to improve access for millions to clean water, sanitation, and housing. CSD will attempt to take action to save the roughly 4,000 children who die each day of diarrhoeal diseases caused by poor sanitation and contaminated drinking water. [Environment News Service](#). 12 April 2005.

[Gorbachev calls for treaty making water, sanitation human right](#) Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is pressing world leaders to adopt a treaty guaranteeing clean water and sanitation for their people. "It's scandalous that a lot of this money is not found and put into saving the kids who die every day from unsafe water." Jeremiah Marquez. [Associated Press](#). 15 April 2005.

[Treaty Urged to Protect Human Right to Water](#) Alarmed by moves to treat water as just another market commodity, groups are urging the adoption a new universal treaty to protect the right to water. Over a billion people lack access to clean water, the primary cause of diseases like cholera that take the lives of more than 6,000 children every day. Haider Rizvi. [IPS News](#). 22 April 2005.

[Giving the Gift of Life to 100 Million Slum Dwellers](#) Senior U.N. officials and civil society groups are urging an increase in funding for developing nations struggling to provide clean drinking water, sanitation and affordable housing to millions. According to WaterAid every year two million children die from diarrhea, which can be prevented by good sanitation. Haider Rizvi. [IPS](#). 13 April 2005.

[Security vs. Rebuilding: Kurdish Town Loses Out](#) The US has canceled the water project it had planned in Halabja. Yet the Environment Ministry recently found that contamination of its water supply could be connected with the relatively high levels of kidney disease, miscarriages and other maladies. [Purchase required]. James Glanz. [New York Times](#). 16 April 2005.

[Lack of sanitary facilities in basic schools in C/R](#) At the regional launch of the 'School Hygiene Education Component' at Cape Coast the Director of Education expressed concern about the lack of toilet and other sanitary facilities in most of the basic schools in the region. It was creating truancy among pupils, since some of them use the lack of such facilities as an excuse. [Ghana News Agency](#). 5 April 2005.

[Save the Land](#) Palestinians and Israelis need to put aside political differences and collaborate to clean sewage-contaminated drinking water with high levels of nitrogen that has led to a rise in health problems. An increase in cases of nausea, cancer and infant deaths means neither side can afford to wait for the conflict to end to set standards. [Membership required]. Tamar Berger. [Jerusalem Post](#). 7 April 2005.

(4) MISCELLANEOUS

[UNEP calls for healthy environment for mothers and children](#) The slogan for World Health Day 2005 is "Make every mother and child count". Environmental hazards are among the major causes of global death and disease, and that the burden falls disproportionately on women and young children, especially in less developed countries. [Xinhuanet](#). 8 April 2005.

[Millions Of Maternal And Child Deaths Preventable](#) With more than half a million women dying in pregnancy or childbirth each year and nearly 11 million children succumbing annually before their fifth birthday, the UN devoted this year's World Health Day to the hundreds of millions of women and children who have no access to potentially life-saving care. Press Release. [United Nations](#). 8 April 2005.

[Millions of Mothers, Babies Die Needlessly – WHO](#) One woman still dies every minute in pregnancy or childbirth, while each 60 seconds 20 young children succumb to easily preventable disease, WHO said. Pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria, measles, AIDS and neonatal ailments were the main killers of children under five. Stephanie Nebahay. [Reuters](#). 7 April 2005.

[Almost 11 million kids die by 5 in developing nations](#) Almost 11 million children in developing countries die before the age of five, most of them from causes that are preventable, the World Bank said in a report. The causes include acute respiratory infection, diarrhea, measles and malaria, which together account for 48% of child deaths in the developing world. [Associated Press](#). 18 April 2005.

[11 million children die annually in poor nations: report](#) [CBC News](#). 18 April 2005.

[Green Data Book Offers Factual Basis for Sustainable Development](#) The latest environmental information for 200 countries was presented Tuesday at CSD. The "Little Green Data Book" shows that use of wood and other biomass fuels in poor countries result in the high health risks, and most of the victims are infants, children, and women from poor rural families. [Environment News Service](#). 21 April 2005.

[Poor children more likely to fall ill](#) About 3 million children are likely to die from malaria in Africa this year, despite the fact that mosquito nets could offer effective protection. About 10.6 million infants and small children die every year from illnesses such as pneumonia and diarrhoea that could be either prevented or easily treated. Wolfgang Mueller. [Mail & Guardian](#), South Africa. 5 April 2005.

[UN says Kenyans have failed to curb malaria](#) The United Nations yesterday described malaria as a national tragedy for Kenya. "Malaria is the silent and deadly killer that takes the life of one African child every 30 seconds. It continues to kill more than 34,000 Kenyan children under the age of five years every year- that is more than 90 every day." Waweru Mugo. [East African Standard](#). 20 April 2005.

[WHO: Malaria Costs Africa More Than \\$12 Bln/year](#) Most of the 1 million deaths caused by malaria each year occur in Africa, where the disease costs \$12 billion a year, WHO said. The burden on health systems, absenteeism among school children and diminished or lost worker productivity, contribute to make malaria a significant contributor to low economic growth. Shapi Shacinda. [Reuters](#). 25 April 2005.

[Pollution, urbanization pose threat to E. Asian people: WB](#) Pollution and environmental degradation increasingly threaten the health of East Asia and Pacific's rapidly urbanizing population, according to two new reports from the World Bank. Water-borne diseases now cause half a million infant deaths annually in the region and air pollution causes thousands of premature deaths. [Xinhuanet](#). 22 April 2005.

[World Bank Urged to Embrace Children](#) Children's advocates are seeking to pressure the World Bank to include children's rights in its poverty reduction strategies, used by some 70 low-income countries. One billion of the world's 2.2 billion children currently live in poverty and 3,900 die every day because they lack access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Niko Kyriakou. [IPS](#). 28 April 2005.

[UNICEF Has Been Big Boost to Child Survival](#) The work of UNICEF in the fields of child survival, child protection and

education could make a huge difference towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Carol Bellamy, its outgoing Executive Director, said at her farewell press briefing. Over the past decade or so, child mortality had dropped by some 16% globally. [UN](#). 27 April 2005.

[In Ethiopian Hills, Five Years to Create Something Out of Nothing](#) Koraro is to be a UN test case in the fight against poverty. It is one of the poorest, most isolated villages in the poorest and most isolated province of one of the world's poorest and most isolated countries. Half of the 1,500 children are underweight and malnourished. [Registration required]. Helene Cooper. [New York Times](#). 27 April 2005.

[What makes kids sick](#) Officials are launching an unprecedented national study to assess how children's surroundings, from the air they breathe and the water they drink to the homes and communities they live in, influence development and health. The ambitious 25-year, \$2.7-billion effort, will catalog the children's environmental exposures from birth until 21. Roni Rabin. [Newsday](#), New York 11 April 2005.

[Experts warn against potential health risks posed by improper waste disposal](#) Experts warned that the prevailing lax enforcement of legislation and regulation of waste disposal in Jordan carried potentially grave risks for health. A study said impoverished children often seen rummaging through garbage containers for empty soda cans to resell were most at risk. Dalya Dajani. [Jordan Times](#). 12 April 2005.

[Expert refutes birth defects fears near landfill sites](#) Birth defects in babies born to parents living within two km of landfill sites are 7% higher than in the general population, a health expert told a public inquiry. The inquiry is hearing an appeal from waste operators who have been refused planning permission to process hazardous waste at Puddock Hill in Warboys. [The Hunts Post](#), England. 18 April 2005.

[Rise in Melanoma in Kids Alarming Doctors](#) Doctors used to think that it took years for the deadliest skin cancer to develop that is, until melanoma started appearing in teenagers and children even younger. Pediatric melanoma is still uncommon in children, affecting only 7 per million, or about 500, according to 2002 statistics from the National Cancer Institute. Lindsey Tanner. [Associated Press](#). 28 April 2005.

[Earthjustice Presents 2005 'Environmental Rights Report' to UN](#) At the 61st Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the International Program of Earthjustice submitted its annual issue paper on the status of environmental rights around the world. According to the report, the human right to a healthy environment is now protected by the constitutions of 117 countries. [Earthjustice](#). 8 April 2005.

[Belarus cursed by Chernobyl](#) "Those who say there is no link with Chernobyl should open their eyes and look at the medical statistics... Before Chernobyl I'd never seen a child with cancer. Now it's common. I treat many more children now with heart defects and kidney damage." Sarah Rainsford. [BBC News](#). 26 April 2005.

[Chernobyl Disaster Blamed for Cancer Surge in Women](#) A leading local environmental group has attributed the increasing number of thyroid cancer patients among Korean women to the radioactive fallout from the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. Its radioactive fallout was reported to have afflicted 3 million people including 1 million children in the surrounding regions. Moon Gwang-lip. [Korea Times](#). 27 April 2005.

[Land of the dead](#) For Belarus, the 1986 nuclear explosion at Chernobyl was a national disaster: Today, 1 out of every 5 Belarussians lives on contaminated land. That is 2.1 million people, of whom 700,000 are children. The number of people with cancer, neurological disorders and genetic mutations increases with each year. Svetlana Alexievich. [The Guardian](#), London. 25 April 2005.

[UN Chief Annan Urges More Help to Chernobyl-Hit Countries](#) Kofi Annan has urged the international community to render more help to Ukraine, Belarus and Russia to recover after Chernobyl. The Ukrainian health ministry says that about 2.3 million Ukrainians, including 450,000 children, suffer today from radiation-related illnesses, including many with thyroid

cancer. [MosNews](#), Russia. 28 April 2005.

[Chernobyl is still a wasteland 19 years on](#) 19 years have passed since the nuclear power plant at Chernobyl exploded. The destruction catapulted more than three million people into a human tragedy. "We have witnessed increases in heart disease and cancer, especially among children... The social impact is almost impossible to calculate." Bruce Venter. [Independent Online](#), South Africa. 26 April 2005.

[Federal 'Marshall Plan' needed to protect children's health and schools](#) Parent, public health, environment, and education groups today urged the White House to protect the health of schoolchildren. "Today is another un-Healthy School Day, with 54 million children in 120,000 schools: too many have serious environmental problems that erode children's health." [Healthy Schools Network](#). 18 April 2005.

[Seacoast should take advantage of EPA grants](#) Asthma, children's environmental health, airborne toxins, pesticides, smart growth in urban environments, pollution prevention in schools and the health-care sector - are any of these issues important to you? All of the issues listed above are programs of the EPA's New England regional office. Editorial. [Portsmouth Herald](#), Maine. 6 April 2005.

[Heinz Kerry challenges scientists to find links between pollution, cancer](#) Teresa Heinz Kerry challenged about 250 doctors and scientists to help Americans "connect the dots" between environmental pollution and rising cancer rates. She urged them to continue studying the causes of drastically increased rates of breast cancer and childhood leukemia. Gabrielle Banks. [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#). 8 April 2005.

[Chinese children use art to advocate for healthy environment](#) Chinese children participated in a contest for symbolic flag designs on the theme of "The environment is my nature and my health," part of the UNESCO "Flags around the World" campaign. More than 3,000 pupils prepared their own designs showing the relationship between environment and health. Xinhuanet. [China View](#). 4 April 2005.
