

## HECANET March 2005

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\* To reflect activities in the next issue of HECANET send information to [heca@nyo.unep.org](mailto:heca@nyo.unep.org)

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#### ARTICLES

A large percentage of the articles addressing children's environmental health dealt with chemicals and especially mercury - both internationally (reacting to the decision in UNEP's Governing Council) and nationally, particularly in the US (in response to the GAO opinion on EPA's role in setting standards for mercury emissions, new EPA rules on mercury emissions from power stations and whether they go far enough to protect children and legal challenges from certain States in this regard, studies linking mercury exposure and children's IQ levels, a new study on the link between mercury and autism, and articles on mercury in seafood, vaccines, and in schools) and in Ghana and Peru (from gold mining). Mining was also related to effects of other heavy metals (in the Philippines) and to childhood lead poisoning, specifically in Peru and Zambia. Lead poisoning was further covered in relation to leaded petrol (Kenya and Gambia), new rules for lead in drinking water, monitoring of lead levels in children, leaded paint and lead in children's jewelry (US). There were a number of articles related to pesticide poisoning with regard to the tragic death of 27 schoolchildren in the Philippines who had eaten cassava roots. Pesticide poisoning was also covered with regard to farm workers and their families in Honduras and the US. There continued to be a number of articles devoted to the possible effects of other chemicals on children's health including fire retardants, rocket fuel, PCBs, CCA (in timber in Australia) agent orange (in Vietnam), arsenic, asbestos (UK, US, Australia) and other pollutants and toxic wastes (in Monrovia, and India). There was also praise for the US/EPA statement that indicated that children may be more vulnerable than adults to cancer risks from certain gene-damaging chemicals.

Media coverage was widespread on water and sanitation issues and the effects on child health and mortality, internationally - related to World Water Day, the launching of the International Decade on Water for Life, and the work of the UN Millennium Project - and nationally in Pakistan, Angola and Nepal. There was also a major new study which estimated that over half a billion people-nearly double previous estimates-were infected by the deadliest form of malaria in 2002. Malaria claims 1 million lives a year in sub-Saharan Africa alone, mostly children under five. More generally, WHO issued a new study on the major causes of childhood disease, which stressed that six mainly preventable diseases account for 73% of child deaths each year. Save the Children also released an important report on health of African children. The Millennium Ecosystem's Assessment released its major study which underscores that damage to ecosystems poses growing threat to human health. There were also a number of articles related to the December Asian Tsunami, and some on the importance of women in

achieving the internationally agreed development goals. Indoor air pollution was covered (in India, China and Hong Kong, and more broadly in South Asia, and in the US). Outdoor air pollution was covered in Beijing (health challenges for China's urban children, including rising ARI levels), Manila (rising childhood asthma levels), US (new rules for coal-burning power plants and school bus emissions). There were a number of articles dealing with the effects of secondhand smoke on children (related to SIDS, RSV, asthma, pneumonia, and bronchitis and ear infections) as well as racial differences in exposure to ETS, and the effects of smoking during pregnancy, which a study concluded may cause genetic harm to babies. 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 (f) Rocket Fuel**
- (3) WATER AND SANITATION**
- (4) MALARIA**
- (5) MISCELLANEOUS**

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**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.

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## **EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **(1) HECA Developments**

A number of meetings on issues of importance to healthy environments for children will take place in the coming months representing important opportunities to link with and build on ongoing and new initiatives, share information and knowledge, continue networking and undertake advocacy. Representatives of HECA will participate in these, and highlights and outcomes of these will be shared widely through HECANET.

The Department of Violence and Injury Prevention at WHO Headquarters is organizing a meeting on child injury prevention planning on 31 March and 1 April. The objectives of the meeting, which will involve a range of partners working in this area, are to discuss the current situation in child injury and potential areas for collaboration, give feedback on elements for inclusion in a WHO strategy for action on child injury prevention, and advise on the possible development of a World Report on Child Injury Prevention. A representative of the HECA Secretariat will be attending to give input to these objectives and to advance work in preventing unintentional injuries to children in the settings where they live, learn and play.

HECA will be represented at the upcoming workshop for trainers "International Perspectives on Children's Environmental Health" in Florence, Italy on 1 April. The aims of the workshop are to: analyze the international situation almost one year after the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Health and Environment (Budapest, June 2004); build partnerships to work on children's environmental health and evaluate successful experiences in this field. A final declaration will be developed and a draft strategy will be proposed on shared efforts for the period 2005-2007." More details on these activities are available from the [HECA Secretariat](#).

### **(2) Health and Environment Linkages Initiative (HELI) and the Children's Environmental Health Indicators Initiative (CEHI) joint meeting in Jordan**

More than 45 experts from Jordan and 15 other countries from the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO) gathered for four days to review and discuss the outcomes and the lessons learned from implementing the [Health and Environment Linkages Initiative](#) (HELI) pilot in Jordan and the [Children's Environmental Health Indicators Initiative](#) (CEHI) pilot projects in Oman and Tunisia. Participants reviewed the tools and methodologies presented at the expert consultation, as well as lessons learned from their implementation through national application within the EMR countries and planned further development for incorporating environment and health considerations into policy-making at the national and regional level.

The HELI study in Jordan highlights that investing in water efficiency brings about favorable returns in health and environment benefits. The study endorses the government overall plans to invest in water efficiency and urges it to consider accelerating the investment as the study revealed that overall each dinar invested in an ambitious water efficiency programme would bring 1.9 worth of benefit for health and the environment.

The application of CEHI was conducted in Oman and Tunisia, and assessment in Yemen and Pakistan are already underway. Initial results were presented by each country (Oman & Tunisia) and a report will be available in the near future. These applications contribute to the building of national and regional capacities in monitoring the status of children's environmental health and to help prioritize environmental risk factors affecting children's health. These pilot projects contribute to the Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators launched at the WSSD in 2002.

The experts examined the possibilities of continuing a Regional Consultation process in order to share experiences in training, disseminating progress about implementation of projects and to further refine methodologies. The participants proposed to carry out an expert group meeting within a year, a workshop within two years with a view to present experiences and results of these initiatives to a Regional Conference on environment and health linkages within three years. For more information on these initiatives, please contact the [HELI Secretariat](#) and/or the [CEHI Secretariat](#).

### **(3) 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.

We hope that you will consider attending or sending a representative to join us in taking action on the many environmental threats to children's 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.

### **(4) 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](#).

### **(5) 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](#).

#### **(6) 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.

#### **(7) 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.

#### **(8) International Society of Doctors for the Environment Latin America/Argentinean Society of Doctors for the Environment**

Workshop for Trainers "International Perspectives on Children's Environmental Health": Florence, Italy, April 1st, 2005. The workshop is promoted by the International Society of Doctors for the Environment, Meyer University Hospital of Florence, Florence University Hospital for Children, Tuscany Regional Agency for Environmental Protection and Tuscany Regional Agency for Health; the International School on Environment, Health and Sustainable Development. The workshop aims to analyze the international situation after the "Fourth Ministerial Conference on Health and Environment: The Future for our Children" (Budapest, June 2004), build partnerships to work on CEH and evaluate successful experiences on this field. A final declaration will be developed and a draft strategy will be proposed on shared efforts for 2005 – 2007 periods. Members of Tuscany Region Workgroup on CEH, Istituto degli Innocenti, EU (DGs Health, Environment, Development), INCHEC, HECA, PAHO, AFRO, IPA and UNICEF will be participating.

AAMMA – ISDE.LA expert's team is invited by the Superior School of Health and Environment of the Comahue National University to develop a "Superior Course on Environmental Impacts on Human Health". This introductory course is addressed to doctors, health workers and other professionals involved in health and environment issues. AAMMA – ISDE.LA expert's team will lecture issues including on "Health effects caused by big environmental changes", "Climate Change and

Ozone layer depletion", "Chemicals substances in the environment", "Children's Environmental Health" and "Urban environmental health". (Comahue, Province of Neuquén, Argentina, April 8th/9th & 15th/16th, 2005).

In the framework of the activities of the "VIGIA Project of the Ministry of Health and Environment of Argentina", AAMMA - ISDE.LA together with the Argentinian Society of Pediatrics developed a Training Workshop for Pediatricians on "Children's Health and Environment" (City of Río Gallegos, Santa Cruz Province, Argentina, March 18th, 2005). AAMMA - ISDE.LA and SAP experts lectured on "Children's special vulnerability to environmental dangers", "Emerging environmental diseases", "Children's chemical safety" and "Children: irreversible but avoidable damage". Many pediatricians participated actively in the workshop and received material on CEH. They requested the continuity of activities on CEH in the region, therefore, AAMMA and the SAP Secretary in Santa Cruz Province are planning and open panel for July 2005.

In the framework of the activities of the "VIGIA Project of the Ministry of Health and Environment of Argentina", AAMMA - ISDE.LA together with the Argentinian Society of Pediatrics developed a Training Workshop for Pediatricians on "Children's Health and Environment" (City of San Salvador de Jujuy, Jujuy Province, Argentina, March 14th, 2005). AAMMA - ISDE.LA and SAP experts lectured on "Children's special vulnerability to environmental dangers", "Emerging environmental diseases", "Children's chemical safety" and "Children: irreversible but avoidable damage". Local doctors and pediatricians, authorities from Child and Maternal Health Office of Jujuy, the Ministry of Health and different NGOs attended the workshop. The participants expressed their own concerns about the specific environmental health risks in the region. The activity also had great media coverage, being covered by 3 television channels.

#### **(9) EPA Healthy School Environments Assessment Tool**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is developing a new, completely voluntary, and fully customizable tool to help school districts conduct self-assessments of their school facilities for potential environmental health and safety hazards. The heart of the tool is a powerful database file that will let school districts customize the tool to manage all aspects of a facility assessment program. The tool comes pre-loaded with a checklist that integrates all of EPA's voluntary and regulatory programs for schools, and is designed so that states and school districts can incorporate their own policies and programs, producing a customized checklist and reference guidebook. To learn more about the draft Healthy School Environments Assessment Tool and download the Beta Version for testing, [visit the web-site](#). EPA is accepting input from organizations and individuals on the draft tool until May 5, 2005.

#### **(10) UC Davis Center for Children's Environmental Health**

The UC Davis Center for Children's Environmental Health announced the publication of its [online newsletter](#). The Center is investigating the role of gene-environment interactions in developmental disabilities such as autism and mental retardation. The newsletter, inter alia, provides details on their CHARGE Study--Childhood Autism Risks from Genetics & the Environment.

#### **(11) 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](#).

## **(12) Save Earth Nigeria**

Save Earth Nigeria (SEN), a youth oriented NGO based in Nigeria, with a focus on environmental education, participatory community development, sustainable energy and micro-enterprise development. SEN is committed towards promoting environmental conservation and sustainable development in the Niger Delta Region. Its programs and projects are integrated, community-driven, people-centred and resulted oriented with an ultimate goal of improving the quality of life of our target audience and incorporate them into the decision-making and development process. SEN hopes to enhance environmental conservation and its responsibility, democratize development and good governance among its target audience. For more information about SEN, please visit their [website](#). SEN maintains a Knowledge and Learning Centre (Resource Centre) that provides information for the students, youths, women, farmers and policy makers for research and other information gathering purposes and would welcome relevant publications (Training Manuals, Handbook, CD-ROMs) for audiences with low literacy skills based on Children's Environmental Health, HIV/AIDS, Water and Sanitation, Environment and Development etc. Materials can be sent to: Save Earth Nigeria(SEN), 20 Joinkrama (Ogwa) Street, P.O.Box 2149, Diobu, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

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## **ARTICLES**

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

[Safe stoves to help curb a disease](#) UNICEF and the Chinese government are collaborating on projects to mitigate arsenic poisoning. In Guizhou the arch culprit is the coal used for heating and cooking, with an affected population of 100,000. The briquette Shao used for decades is made of arsenic-rich coal and years of exposure to the smoke had cost him his health. Rong Jiaojiao. [Xinhuanet](#). 15 March 2005.

[Cooking With Wood Contributes to Climate Change](#) Research shows that 'biofuels', which are widely used in South Asia, are a significant source of pollution in the form of soot. Indoor pollution caused by burning biofuels affects the health of hundreds of millions of people, and kills more children each year than malaria. Eva Tallaksen. [Science & Development Network](#). 7 March 2005.

[A silent killer of rural women](#) Scientists from the Calcutta-based Chittaranjan Cancer Research Institute did a thorough check-up on rural housewives who use the chula (cooking stove), as part of a study on indoor pollutants in rural areas. "This chula is a silent killer. These women are actually inhaling pollutants equivalent to as many as 20 cigarettes everyday." Amitabha Bhattasali. [BBC News](#). 2 March 2005.

[No hiding place from pollution](#) A Hong Kong professor believes the city's high levels of indoor air pollution and second-hand smoke put office workers and families at risk from lung damage, heart problems and death. "If you are in a polluted city then the indoor levels will reflect the outdoor levels." Zhu Sun. [The Standard](#), Hong Kong. 7 March 2005.

[Breathing Easy: Three areas of home hotbeds of germs](#) The indoor environment is more hazardous to health than the outdoor. Pesticides are tracked indoors, diesel exhaust carbon is allergenic, and food poisoning begins at home. Infants who crawl on carpeting are especially susceptible to exposure to the pesticides due to hand-to-mouth activity. Mark R. Sneller. [Tucson Citizen](#), Arizona. 8 March 2005.

**(b) Outdoor air pollution**

[Air Pollution Presents Health Challenge for China's Children](#) When it comes to air pollution, Beijing faces the three "C"s, cars, coal and construction. All three contribute to Beijing's thick air pollution, which damages health, especially that of children. A professor at Beijing University's School of Public Health says the number of children with ARI is on the rise. Barbara Howard. [VOA News](#). 30 March 2005.

[Air Pollution Killing Us Softly](#) WHO and UNEP studies show that Manila's air shed is one of the 5 dirtiest and most polluted in the world. In March 1999, the BMJ quoted a pediatrician, "About 90% of my patients have respiratory illness, and we're seeing babies as young as two months suffering from asthma. 20 years ago, this was unheard of." Rafael Castillo. [Philippine Daily Inquirer](#). 12 March 2005.

[US pollution cuts could save 17,000 lives a year](#) Coal-burning power plants in 28 US states will be forced to reduce their emissions of smog and soot to comply with a new Environmental Protection Agency rule enacted on Thursday. The cuts are predicted to prevent 17,000 premature deaths and 700,000 lung-related illnesses every year. Maggie McKee. [New Scientist](#). 11 March 2005.

[EPA Enacts Long-Awaited Rule To Improve Air Quality, Health](#) [Registration required]. Rick Weiss. [Washington Post](#). 11 March 2005.

[In bid to cut mercury, US lets other toxins through](#) The new EPA mercury rule backs away from new regulations on emissions of more than 60 heavy metals and toxins, say environmental experts. Yet such concerns have been nearly lost in the debate. "Power plants are big toxic emitters. With this mercury rule, EPA is letting them off the hook." Mark Clayton. [Christian Science Monitor](#). 31 March 2005.

[More NYC School Buses Get Equipment to Cut Diesel Emissions](#) The New York Power Authority (NYPA) intends to expand its Clean School Bus Program, installing control devices to cut harmful diesel emissions on 1,500 to 2,000 New York City school buses by about 40 percent. "Another step in the right direction to protect the health of our school children." [Environment News Service](#). 7 March 2005.

[Denver school buses switch to biodiesel](#) The Denver Public School district -- with the largest school bus fleet in Colorado -- will use biodiesel fuel in 50 of its 450 school buses. The district is using the fuel as part of the federal Environmental Protection Agency's "Clean School Bus" initiative to reduce diesel pollution and improve air quality. [Denver Business Journal](#). 28 February 2005.

[Diesel pollution filter measure gains despite broad opposition](#) The Senate Environment Committee yesterday approved a bill designed to reduce deadly diesel pollution, Critics said lawmakers should focus more on the problem of particulate emissions from school buses, which the bill would not significantly address. [The Star-Ledger](#), New Jersey. 8 March 2005.

[In Rural Areas, the Heat Is on Over Practice of Trash Burning](#) The growing body of research about the dangers of burn barrels, namely the dioxins and other pollutants, has encouraged a movement to ban their use. "They don't understand the potential health implications for them and their children and their neighbors." [Registration required]. Lisa W. Foderaro. [New York Times](#). 7 March 2005.

**(c) Asthma**

[The Asthma Trap](#) All it takes to control asthma is the right medication, clean air, and a reasonably stress-free life. But for millions of children caught up in the epidemic, none of those things are anywhere within reach. Asthma has become the most common chronic illness among children in this country, affecting some 6 million kids, and its prevalence is growing. Sara Corbett. [Mother Jones](#). March/April 2005.

[Waiting to Inhale](#) As asthma cases soar, doctors are finally beginning to understand how this chronic disease works. At some point in early childhood, or possibly in the womb, exposure to a critical dose of pollutants takes place that turns a person into a lifetime asthmatic. Tara Pepper. Newsweek International. 14 March 2005.

[Poor housing may contribute to asthma, study determines](#) Children living in 6 Louisville ZIP codes are more likely to suffer from asthma than the national average. Many factors link asthma and poor housing. A neighborhood with poor housing is more likely to have poor air quality, homes with cold and damp conditions, cockroaches and dust. Sheldon S. Shafer. The Courier-Journal, Kentucky. 8 March 2005.

#### **(d) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking**

[Smoking in pregnancy damages baby's chromosomes](#) Mothers who smoke when they're pregnant may cause genetic damage in their babies, findings from a new study suggest. In fact, one common type of chromosome damage linked to maternal smoking is known to increase the risk of blood cancers. The women in the smoking group smoked at least 10 cigarettes per day. Reuters Health. 8 March 2005.

[Smoking damages foetal cell DNA](#) BBC News. 8 March 2005.

[Smoking During Pregnancy May Up Child Leukemia Risk](#) Steven Reinberg. HealthDayNews. 8 March 2005.

[Smoking can damage fetal genes](#) Joyce Howard Price. The Washington Times. 10 March 2005.

[Smoking in late pregnancy is linked to lower IQ in offspring](#) Mothers who smoke in late pregnancy risk having children with lower intelligence. The more cigarettes a woman smoked, the greater the risk. The association was as strong in children with high social status as in low status offspring. Roger Dobson. [Purchase required]. British Medical Journal. 5 March 2005.

[UCSF report says Philip Morris influenced scientific article](#) Researchers at UCSF reviewing once-secret industry documents have detailed an elaborate effort by a leading tobacco company to raise doubts among doctors and public health officials about the well-established link between secondhand smoke and sudden infant death syndrome. Alex Barnum. San Francisco Chronicle. 7 March 2005.

[Infants Who Live With Smokers Risk Severe Viral Infection](#) Most children are exposed to Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) by the time they are two years old, but some get a mild cold while others end up in intensive care. Researchers found that a child's age at the time of infection and whether that child lives with a smoker makes the difference. Environment News Service. 8 March 2005.

[Secondhand Smoke](#) In the last two decades, research has ballooned on the health risks associated with exposure to secondhand smoke. It leads to 3,000 lung cancer deaths each year, and increases the risk for many other types of cancer. In children, secondhand smoke increases the risk for asthma, pneumonia, bronchitis and ear infections. Star Tribune, Minneapolis. 27 March 2005.

[Racial Differences in Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke among Children](#) Exposure to ETS is a major cause of morbidity and mortality among U.S. children. Despite African-American children's lower reported exposure, they suffer disproportionately from tobacco-related illnesses. Stephen Wilson/Robert Kahn/Jane Khoury/Bruce Lanphear. Environmental Health Perspectives. 3 March 2005.

[Study Examines Racial Differences Among Children To Environmental Tobacco Smoke Exposure](#) Science Daily. 15 March 2005.

[Study says quitting smoking now could help kids kick habit later](#) If parents quit smoking by the time their child is in third grade, they increase that child's odds of also quitting smoking, according to a study. Asthma, bronchitis, ear infections and pneumonia have all been linked to lighting up around children. Julie Davidow. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. 2 March 2005.

**(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General**

[EPA Says Children May Be Vulnerable than Adults to Carcinogens](#) Children may be more vulnerable than adults to cancer risks from certain gene-damaging chemicals, EPA said. Children 2 years old and younger might be 10 times more vulnerable to certain chemicals. Children between the ages of 2 and 16 might be 3 times more vulnerable. John Heilprin. Environmental News Network. 30 March 2005.

[EPA Issues "Guidelines for Carcinogen Risk Assessment" and Supplemental Guidance on Risks From Early-Life Exposure](#) 2 documents provide principles and procedures to guide EPA assessing cancer risk from exposures to environmental pollutants. They describe approaches that EPA could use in assessing cancer risks exposures to children from 0 to 16 years of age. Press Release. EPA. 29 March 2005.

[INSIGHTS: Time to Protect Babies From Dangerous Products](#) Unbeknownst to parents baby products contain a witch's brew of dangerous ingredients. Most disturbing are three groups of widely used ingredients known as "hidden carcinogens", to which infants are about 100 times more sensitive than adults. Samuel S. Epstein & Ronnie Cummins. Environment News Service. 3 March 2005.

[Q and A about environmental contaminants in breast milk](#). Chemicals detected in human breast milk include pesticides, PCBs, flame retardants, mercury, lead and perchlorate. Infants are more vulnerable because their systems are still developing, and they eat, drink and breathe more by body weight than adults. Sara Shipley. Saint Louis Post-Dispatch. 15 March 2005.

[Legislature considers bill to ban chemical from kids' products](#) An obscure chemical in hard plastic baby bottles, liners inside canned food and some water containers lies at the center of controversy as the California Legislature considers a bill to ban it in children's products. Jane Kay. San Francisco Chronicle. 31 March 2005.

[I am polluted](#) Many scientists believe that exposure to a range of chemicals in the environment may be behind a host of health problems. "We're concerned about the rates of cancer in our society, growing rates of autism. In most developed countries, asthma has grown substantially over the past 20 years, particularly in children." [Purchase required]. Mark Stevenson. Globe & Mail, Canada. 5 March 2005.

[The body chemical](#) For 50 years, society has pumped the global environment full of chemicals. Our bodies have become repositories for those chemicals. Infants begin life with detectable levels of PCBs and DDT in their veins, and fire retardants lace mothers' breast milk. Researchers are finding some of these compounds impair our health. Douglas Fischer. Inside Bay Area, California. 11 March 2005.

[Our body's burden must be addressed](#) CADMIUM, DDT, dioxins, formaldehyde, lead, mercury, PBDEs, PCBs, PFOs, PFOAs and phthalates. A few of the 82,000 chemicals that we may be absorbing into our bodies. We don't know what's there, which ones are harmful and what specific effects they may have on us, our children or grandchildren. OpEd. Oakland Tribune, California. 13 March 2005.

[Tamil Nadu village opposes waste dumping plan](#) The Tamil Nadu government's plan to set up a hazardous waste landfill site in Gummidipoondi village in the northern outskirts of Chennai city, has run into open hostility from the villagers concerned. Studies found that children born near landfill sites have low birth-weight and newborns tend to have higher rates of birth defects. Yahoo India. 15 March 2005.

[Citizens Raise Alarm About Firestone's "Pollutants"](#) Jerry, 10, and John, 14, may never have the opportunity of eating fish from the Farmington River as their parents did. Locals believe that the Firestone Company is pouring "toxic wastes" into the river, killing its fishes and destroying other aquatic lives without doing much to remedy the consequences. Gibson Jerue. The Analyst, Monrovia. 14 March 2005.

[Placer Dome is Latest Oxfam Target](#) The battle over who is ultimately fiscally responsible for the clean-up of pollution resulting from the 1996 Marcopper tailings spill in the Philippines shifted into high gear Wednesday with the release of a Oxfam report into the aftermath of the disaster. The report claims that heavy metal poisoning has killed three children. Dorothy Kosich. [Mineweb](#). 16 March 2005

[Placer Must Clean Up Philippine Mine Site - Oxfam](#) Nicole Mordant. [Reuters](#). 16 March 2005.

[Study finds toxic chemicals in dust samples from U.S. households](#) Americans are exposed to potentially dangerous chemicals in their homes, according to a new study, called "Sick of Dust". Researchers tested the dust samples for six types of chemicals, including pesticides and flame retardants. Infants and young children are especially vulnerable. Terence Chea. [Associated Press](#). 22 March 2005.

[Study Finds Toxic Chemicals In Common Household Dust](#) [Subscription required]. Jim Carlton. [Wall Street Journal](#). 22 March 2005.

[Study Finds Toxic Dust Samples In 7 States](#) [Chemical Online News](#). 29 March 2005.

[NZ hosts Pacific workshop on cleaning up pollutants](#) Delegates from Pacific nations met for a three-day workshop on how to reduce contamination by persistent organic pollutants (POPs) such as dioxins. The 12 common chemicals contribute to cancer, birth defects and other health problems, and can stay in the environment for 100 years. [Stuff National News](#), New Zealand. 2 March 2005.

[PCBs in farmed salmon a danger to Americans](#) High levels of PCBs are found in farmed salmon in Chile, where 60 percent of the US's salmon comes from. PCBs can affect the immune, reproductive and nervous systems in several ways. Children born to mothers with high PCB levels were found to have learning disabilities and low birth weight. Scott Poniewaz. [Montana Kaimin](#). 16 March 2005.

[Agent Orange legal case dismissed](#) A US federal court has dismissed a legal action brought by Vietnamese plaintiffs over the use of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. Plaintiffs had sought compensation from firms that manufactured the chemical, which allegedly caused birth defects, miscarriages and cancer. Vietnam's Red Cross says 150,000 children were severely affected. [BBC News](#). 10 March 2005.

[Vietnam fury at Agent Orange case](#) Vietnamese plaintiffs have condemned a US court's decision to dismiss their legal action against manufacturers of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. "It is a wrong decision, unfair and irresponsible." The judge in the case said allegations the chemical caused birth defects and illness had not been proved. [BBC News](#). 11 March 2005.

[Vietnam's Agent Orange Victims Feel Cheated by U.S. Court](#) [Registration required]. Tran Dinh Thanh Lam. [Inter-Press Service News Agency](#). 14 March 2005.

[Govt to investigate asbestos illness claims](#) In the late sixties the children of the NSW town of Baryulgil had a well-filled sandpit in their playground, courtesy of the local asbestos mine company. Now a State Government funded special medical team is about to visit Baryulgil to assess claims of asbestos related illnesses by locals, many of whom were Aborigines. Toni Hassan. [ABC News](#). 4 March 2005.

[Asbestos devastates Aboriginal community](#) James Hardie opened an asbestos mine in Baryulgil, New South Wales in 1944. Its Aboriginal workers were exposed to levels of carcinogenic dust thousands of times over the then, inadequate, government standard. Children played in tonnes of asbestos tailings scattered throughout the community. Matthew Peacock. [ABC News](#), Australia. 10 March 2005.

[Dust on father's clothes killed over 50 years later](#) The family of a woman who died half a century after being exposed as a child to asbestos dust on her father's clothes has won a battle for compensation. "We had to prove that Sylvia's father's

employers should have been aware of the dangers employees' family members faced," she added. Mark Branagan. [Yorkshire Post](#), England. 3 March 2005.

[Girl died because father was covered in asbestos dust](#) Lee Glendinning. [Evening Standard](#). 4 March 2005.

[Some uses of CCA timber treatments to be phased out](#) The Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority review concluded that the APVMA could not be satisfied that there wasn't a health risk for people, particularly children who had frequent and close exposure to treated timber products such as decks, garden furniture and playground structures.' Media Release. [APVMA](#). 15 March 2005.

[Banned: the pine in garden furniture](#) Sean Nicholls & Harriet Alexander. [Sydney Morning Herald](#). 16 March 2005.

[Treated timber 'a time bomb'](#) Laurel-Lee Roderick. [Illawarra Mercury](#), Australia. 16 March 2005.

[Councils concern on play equipment](#) Australian councils today called for a national directive on whether to remove treated pine play equipment from parks after it was banned by the country's chemical regulator. Children aged three to five were deemed high-risk because they were most likely to put their fingers in their mouths. Tamara McLean. [The Australian](#). 16 March 2005.

[Wife of radio host urges schools to clean "green"](#) Eliminating toxins from cleaning products may help reduce the prevalence of childhood cancer, asthma, autism and attention deficit disorder. Imus spoke about "Greening the Cleaning" products, made from natural ingredients such as vegetables and citrus fruits and do not contain toxins. Naomi Mueller. [Asbury Park Press](#), New Jersey. 10 March 2005.

[U.S. environmentalist says lessons of Love Canal can be applied to N.B.](#) One of the key players in the Love Canal toxic waste scandal says political leaders have to start putting the health of children and the environment ahead of industrial development. Lessons learned have application in New Brunswick where residents raise concerns about local industries. Chris Morris. [Canadian Press](#). 17 March 2005.

[Beauty, and the Beast](#) Phthalates, the chemicals used in some cosmetics, can cause birth defects, disrupt hormone systems and lead to reproductive problems. The EU recently banned them. Now, despite a huge outcry from the cosmetics industry, some California lawmakers are trying to ban phthalates in the U.S. Kelly Hearn. [Hartford Advocate](#), Connecticut. 17 March 2005.

[Dangers lurk in school science labs](#) Across the country, middle and high school science labs are overflowing with potentially dangerous and unstable chemicals. If handled improperly, they can explode, catch on fire or burn through the skin. "In many schools, the stock rooms are not kept locked... It would be very easy for kids to get in there." Tom Costello. [NBC News](#). 10 March 2005.

[St. James-Arsenic found near school](#) Lori DelleCave sent her son to fourth grade just days after she got a letter that arsenic was found in soil near his school. The school district ordered an independent lab to inspect soil samples and take air samples from the building. "Please be assured that the health and safety of our children are our first priorities," Theresa Vargas. [Newsday](#), New York. 30 March, 2005.

## **(b) Lead**

[Peru's Doe Run Smelter Poisoning Children – NGOs](#) Almost all young children in Peru's La Oroya mining town have harmful levels of lead in their blood and many are suffering from bronchitis and stunted growth because of toxic gases pumped out by the US-owned metals smelter there, community groups said. "Our children are being poisoned by this smelter." Robin Emmott. [Reuters](#). 31 March 2005.

[ZAMBIA: Lead poisoning concern in mining town](#) A Zambian community faces serious health risks as a result of lead and

zinc mining activities. Environmentalists say the most polluted area is the sprawling Katondo township, which has sprouted in the shadow of the defunct mine. Health workers say up to 90,000 children could be at risk of lead poisoning in Katondo. [UN/OCHA IRIN](#). 8 March 2005.

[Research Finds Kenyan Vehicles Worst Polluters](#) A study on environmental pollution owing to leaded petrol in 11 cities across the world highly indicted Nairobi in particular and Kenya in general for the menace. Inhalation of lead affects mental development in children by reducing their IQ and causes respiratory diseases like lung cancer. Waweru Mugo. [East African Standard](#). 22 March 2005.

[Exposed: The death lurking in leaded fuel](#) Jeff Otieno. [The Nation](#), Kenya. 22 March 2005.

[Workshop Provides Strategies to Phase Out Leaded Petrol in Gambia](#) Lead is a dangerous air pollutant. It reduces the intelligence of children and causes behavioural disorders and impaired development. The phasing out leaded petrol programme, pioneered and sponsored by UNEP, is greatly important to the Gambian environment, health and economy. Landing Bondi. [Gambia Daily News](#). 11 March 2005.

[A Move to Stricter Lead Monitoring](#) Stricter monitoring and reporting of problems with lead in drinking water will be required of utilities, states, schools and child care facilities, EPA said. Officials are moving to impose stricter requirements in the 1991 lead and copper regulations next year, due to problems with lead in drinking water in Washington. D.C. [Registration required]. [New York Times](#). 8 March 2005.

[EPA Announces Plan for Stricter Controls on Lead in Drinking Water](#) John Heilprin. [Environment News Network](#). 8 March 2005.

[EPA Seeks Stiffer Rules On Lead In Water](#) [Registration required]. Carol D. Leonnig. [Washington Post](#). 8 March 2005.

[Unhealthy legacy](#) Findings by university researchers suggest that protecting children from lead in the environment requires more soil testing, more frequent testing of children and closer attention to where kids play. Even low levels of lead can cause learning and behavioral problems in children. Among Hoosier children screened, about 10% show signs of lead poisoning. Editorial. [Indiana Star](#). 17 March 2005.

[Legislator seeks to toughen standards for lead poisoning](#) Calling for action to reduce lead poisoning in children, a legislator proposed stricter regulations and taxing paint to pay for them. Studies show that children are adversely affected by lower levels of lead than previously thought. "Lead poisoning is probably the number one threat to children's health". Pat Doyle. [Star Tribune](#), Minneapolis. 15 March 2005.

[Tips offer way to fix lead-paint hazards](#) County environmental health specialists are offering to hold up to four classes a year on how to prevent and safely repair lead paint hazards in rental units. More than 7,000 children in North Carolina have tested positive for dangerous levels of lead in their systems during the past 10 years. Stan Swofford. [News & Record](#), North Carolina. 1 March 2005.

[In our view: Town must deal with history](#) After more than a decade of EPA efforts to clean up the lead residue left by Picher's mining heritage, mountains of heavy metal-laden chat continue to loom over and around the community. Little wonder that families with small children want out. Low levels of lead can permanently damage a child's nervous system. [The Joplin Globe](#), Missouri. 6 March 2005.

[Pregnant women offered lead test kits](#) A program provides free kits for pregnant women to test older homes for lead, but officials said it does little to help them remove it. "Lead poisoning is a very real threat, one that could lead to lifelong behavior problems and learning problems in our children." Maya Kremen. [Herald News](#), New Jersey. 11 March 2005.

[Experts Warn Parents Of Lead Exposure Risks](#) Health inspectors ordered more intensified cleaning at a west end school

Tuesday because lead dust levels in four areas remained higher than they should be. Fiber, iron and calcium helps prevent lead absorption and kids with empty stomachs can ingest 10 to 100 times more lead than those who have regular meals. [Channel Cincinnati](#). 16 March 2005.

[NASCAR under fire for using leaded gasoline](#) NASCAR is under fire for using leaded gasoline more than 6 years after the EPA asked the industry to switch to unleaded. "The remaining uses of gasoline containing alkyl-lead...puts certain subpopulations at risk. These subpopulations include residents, particularly children, near sources such as racetracks." [Fox Sports](#). 2 March 2005.

[Dangerous metal can harm kids after leaching through gold plate](#) Something dangerous could be lurking within the jewelry parents often buy their children -- lead. Several cases of lead poisoning in Kansas have been traced to gold-plated jewelry, usually in children young enough to put jewelry in their mouths. Christina M. Woods. [The Wichita Eagle](#), Kansas. 7 March 2005.

[Nearly 3 million metal charms recalled](#) A New Jersey company is recalling about 2.8 million metal charms because they contain high levels of lead. The recall was prompted by reports that a 6-year-old girl from San Jose, Calif., apparently suffered lead poisoning in December after placing in her mouth a charm she wore as a necklace. [Registration Required]. Elizabeth Wolfe. [Oregon Live](#). 3 March 2005.

[CPSC, Hirschberg Schutz & Co. Inc. Announce Recall of Metal Charms](#) Press Release. [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#). 3 March 2005.

[S.J. girl poisoned; trinkets recalled](#) [Registration Required]. Barbara Feder Ostrov. [Mercury News](#). 4 March 2005.

### **(c) Pesticides**

[Groups revive campaign vs pesticides](#) The food poisoning that killed 27 children in Bohol has given environmentalists a new reason to fight for a total pesticide ban in the country. Each year, over 220,000 people die of pesticide poisoning, mostly in poor countries, where over 25 million are poisoned by banned pesticides. [Philippine Daily Inquirer](#). 21 March 2005.

[Pesticide in Snack Said Likely Killed Kids](#) Laboratory tests show that 27 children who died after eating cassava roots last week were poisoned with pesticide, health experts said. "This means that it's very much possible that the food was prepared in an environment that was highly toxic and contaminated with chemical poisons and bacteria". [Registration required]. AP. [Los Angeles Times](#). 14 March 2005.

[Manila suspects pesticide poisoning behind deaths](#) Romeo Ranoco. [Reuters AlertNet](#). 12 March 2005.

[Honduran Workers Sue Over Pesticide Use](#) More than 700 former banana plantation workers have sued seeking \$137 million in damages for the company's use of a banned pesticide, a lawyer said. Among the most-egregious cases is a former plantation employee whose three children were born mentally retarded and with birth defects. [Registration required]. [Honduras This Week](#). 6 March 2005.

[Misuse of Pesticides Poses Real Threat](#) We have no State standards to protect children from unnecessary pesticide exposures from agricultural spraying. Children are likely to be exposed to substances in their environment at higher levels than are adults and exposure to toxicants at such times may result in irreversible damage. William U. Couzens, Editorial. [Fauquier Times-Democrat](#), Virginia. 2 March 2005.

[Monitoring protects farm workers](#) There is a new program of 'medical monitoring' that gives farm workers more protection from exposure to pesticides. But pesticides are not just a problem for workers who mix, load and apply them. Others who plant, thin, harvest and pack, and our children, also are exposed to and hurt by pesticides. Martin Rios/Pastor Mejia. [Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#). 1 March 2005.

[To spray or not to spray? City considers using herbicides against invasive plants in hills](#) Fast-growing plant species have prompted the Council to consider relaxing the city's ban on herbicides. Oakland has jumped into the global debate over the safety of using herbicides to fight invasive non-native plants from remote canyons to playgrounds. Jim Herron Zamora. [San Francisco Chronicle](#). 15 March 2005.

[Assembly won't change pesticide law](#) After listening to testimony about pesticide use, the Anchorage Assembly opted to delay a decision on changes in rules regarding notification about the use of the chemicals under certain circumstances. Studies show that pesticides are linked to cancer, neurological diseases, birth defects and infertility. Anne Aurand. [Anchorage Daily News](#), Alaska. 30 March 2005.

#### **(d) Mercury**

[Earth window - No end in sight for toxic pollution](#) Critics have slammed the US for delaying efforts to halt the worldwide trade in mercury. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that 300 000 American newborns are at risk from mercury poisoning - while "millions" of babies in other parts of the world could be harmed. Tony Carnie. [The Mercury](#). 3 March 2005.

[Nature: Pact to curb mercury is rejected](#) The agreement at UNEP's Governing Council stops short of setting up a legally binding global treat, but calls for "voluntary partnerships" to reduce the damaging impacts of mercury pollution. Pregnant women are advised to regulate their consumption of certain fish, protecting their unborn children from exposure. Richard Black. [BBC News](#). 25 February 2005.

[Countries reject global mercury treaty](#) A meeting in Nairobi has failed to devise a global treaty to curb the production of mercury. Instead, governments agreed to monitor mercury trade more formally and to encourage voluntary actions to reduce use. Researchers have linked it to learning difficulties and abnormal fetal development in the past. Roxanne Khamisi. [The Manila Times](#). 8 March 2005.

[Galamsey 'Breeds' Mercury Poisoning](#) Research in Ghana on water bodies and small-scale gold mining indicates an excessive pollution of mercury. People living along the river and depending on riverine products are easily exposed to methylmercury and may develop toxic levels through repeated consumption of these contaminated fish. [Purchase required]. Ivy Benson. [Ghanaian Chronicle](#). 2 March 2005.

[Devastating Effects of Toxic Wastes on African Rivers](#) Chemical residues dumped into African rivers by transnational companies has emerged as a severe environmental problem in Africa. In Ghana, water bodies and sediments have revealed the presence of excessive mercury concentration resulting from gold mining. GAEC warn against regular consumption of fish. [Prensa Latina](#), Luanda. 8 March 2005.

[Andean villagers seek American justice](#) In June, 2000, a mercury spill contaminated Choropampa and two neighboring towns. Rocio Guzman's three young daughters picked up the droplets with spoons and played with them. Others gathered the liquid with pieces of paper or their bare hands, thinking it was a precious metal. Children tasted it. Peter Hecht. [San Francisco Chronicle](#). 14 March 2005.

[Mercury hurts children most](#) Children's bodies respond differently to our environment. Pollutants that might be tolerated by an adult have a larger impact on a child. Mercury, a toxic metal, is one pollutant that I am particularly concerned about. Like lead it has harmful effects on the minds of growing children. [Registration required]. Christine Ziebold. [Twin Cities](#), Minneapolis. 6 March 2005.

[Pollution hurts economy and health](#) In a pregnant woman, mercury crosses the placenta and concentrates in the unborn child, where it can interfere with normal fetal brain development. A study, from pediatricians at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, has determined that these children suffer a small but measurable loss of intellectual capacity. Kim N. Dietrich. [The Enquirer](#), Cincinnati. 7 March 2005.

[Group links mercury to learning disabilities](#) The Learning Disabilities Association of America estimates 12-15% of children and adults have learning and other developmental disabilities, some caused by mercury exposure. "We're talking about lifelong impact, people who struggle because of neurological deficits incurred in the womb." Eleanor Chute. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. 15 March 2005.

[The Age of Autism: Mercury in the air](#) A new study has found a possible link between higher mercury emissions and higher rates of autism. "On average, for each 1,000 pounds of environmentally released mercury, there was a 43 percent increase in the rate of special education services and a 61 percent increase in the rate of autism." Dan Olmsted. United Press International. 15 March 2005.

[Possible Mercury, Autism Connection Found in Study](#) Researchers have found a possible link between autism and mercury. Studying Texas school districts, the epidemiologists found that those districts with the highest levels of mercury in the environment also had the highest rates of special education students and autism diagnoses. [Registration required]. Thomas Maugh. Los Angeles Times. 17 March 2005.

[Breathe in](#) A new study from the University of Texas suggested a possible link between environmental mercury and autism. State by state the higher the mercury emissions, the higher the incidence of autism Yet like the United States, Virginia doesn't limit how much mercury polluters can churn into the air you breathe, despite the fact that it is extremely toxic. Daily Press, Virginia. 28 March 2005.

[Bush Mercury Plan Rests on Flawed Analysis](#) EPA's economic analysis of its proposal to regulate mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants is seriously flawed and should be revised, GAO said. It's analysis presents a biased case. Young children whose brains are still developing, and women of childbearing age are most at risk from mercury. J.R. Pegg. Environment News Service. 9 March 2005.

[EPA Distorted Mercury Analysis, GAO Says](#) [Registration required]. Shankar Vedantam. Washington Post. 8 March 2005.

[EPA's mercury rules are just one symptom of a greater problem](#) EPA doesn't seem to be completely in charge of developing environmental protection rules, but relays on outside help. EPA failed to document the impact of mercury on brain development and neurological impairment, and favored an emission control approach preferred by industry. Editorial. Portland Press Herald, Maine. 30 March 2005.

[Bush to propose limits on mercury emissions](#) The Bush administration this week will propose the first federal controls on coal-fired power plant emissions of mercury. Mercury has in the past two decades been found to cause direct harm to the development of nervous systems in infants and young children. [Registration required]. Felicity Barringer. New York Times. 14 March 14 2005.

[EPA Issues Rules Cutting Mercury Pollution](#) The Bush administration ordered a nearly 50% cut in mercury pollution from power plants over the next 15 years, adopting a market-based strategy to protect fetuses and young children from nerve damage. "The US is the first nation to take a leadership role in addressing mercury from power plants." John Heilprin. Daily Democrat, California. 16 March 2005.

[Agency Orders Power Plant Mercury Pollution Cut by Nearly 50 Percent](#) John Heilprin. Environmental News Network. 16 March 2005.

[Amid rising concern about mercury, EPA sets new rules](#) Brad Knickerbocker. Christian Science Monitor. 16 March 2005.

[EPA Targets Mercury 'Hot Spots' at Power Plants](#) [Registration required]. Tom Hamburger & Alan C. Miller. Los Angeles Times. 16 March 2005.

[Bush to Permit Trading of Credits to Limit Mercury](#) [Purchase required]. Felicity Barringer. New York Times. 14 March 2005.

[EPA Issues Rules to Cut Mercury Pollution](#) [Registration required]. Associated Press. New York Times. 16 March 2005.

[New EPA rules target mercury pollution levels](#) Tammy Webber. Indiana Star. 15 March 2006.

[Mercury Emissions To Be Traded](#) [Registration required]. Shankar Vedantam. Washington Post. 15 March 2005.

[EPA rule will limit power-plant mercury](#). Beth Daley. Boston Globe. 15 March 2005.

[EPA issuing rules on power plant mercury](#) USA Today. 14 March 2005.

[EPA says system would cut mercury from power plants](#) Sara Shipley. Saint Louis Post-Dispatch. 14 March 2005.

[EPA to finalize mercury emission rules](#) Joan Lowy. Scripps Howard News Service. 14 March 2005.

[EPA announces mercury reduction rules](#) Joan Lowy. Scripps Howard News Service. 15 March 2005.

[EPA orders cuts in mercury pollution](#) James Bruggers. Courier-Journal, Kentucky. 16 March 2005.

[US EPA Sets First Utility Mercury Emission Cut Rules](#) Chris Baltimore. Planet Ark. 16 March 2005.

[Mercury emission cuts set](#) [Registration required]. Tom Avril. Philadelphia Inquirer. 16 March 2005.

[EPA, environmentalists don't expect mercury guidelines to do much](#) The administration's new limits on mercury pollution from power plants have provoked an unusual agreement: Neither the government nor environmentalists think they'll do much good. Bush says the problem is a global one. Environmentalists say the Bush plan is too small and slow. Seth Borenstein. Knight Ridder Newspapers. 14 March 2005.

[EPA's mercury regulations raising a ruckus](#) The U.S. EPA will announce controversial new mercury control regulations that will use a market-based reduction strategy favored by utility companies but, according to critics, produce mercury contamination "hot spots." Mercury effects include brain and nervous system damage in children. Don Hokey. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. 15 March 2005.

[Critics Swift to Jump on Rule to Reduce Mercury Emissions](#) [Registration required]. Alan C. Miller & Tom Hamburger. Los Angeles Times. 15 March 2005.

[New mercury rule fuels critics](#) Dan Fagin. Newsday, New York. 16 March 2005.

[Power Plants Evade Tough Mercury Cleanup Requirements](#) Press Release. Natural Resources Defense Council. 15 March 2005.

[Plan to cut mercury emissions isn't strict enough, groups say](#) Sara Shipley. Saint Louis Post-Dispatch. 15 March 2005.

[Groups condemn EPA's mercury rule](#) Traci Watson. USA Today. 16 March 2005.

[EPA's mercury rule attacked](#) Kim McGuire. Denver Post. 16 March 2005.

[Critics dismiss new rules on mercury as too weak](#) [Registration required]. Michael Hawthorne. Chicago Tribune. 15 March 2005.

[U.S. issues new mercury limits, draws criticism](#) [Registration required]. Michael Hawthorne. Chicago Tribune. 16 March 2005.

[Environmentalists assail mercury rule](#) Matt Pacenza. Times Union. 16 March 2005.

[New mercury rules announced; levels lag behind current reductions](#) Seth Borenstein. Knight Ridder Newspapers. 15 March 2005.

[EPA announces limits on coal-burning plants; environmentalists wary](#) [Registration required]. Bob Downing. Akron Beacon Journal, Ohio. 15 March 2005.

[New mercury limits raise toxic debate, especially here](#) Dina Cappiello. Houston Chronicle. 16 March 2005.

[Power companies must cut mercury](#) Tammy Webber. Indiana Star. 15 March 2005.

[Bush Mercury Rule Sparks Controversy, Litigation](#) The Bush administration finalized regulations for coal-fired power plants to cut mercury pollution, but there is little chance the plan will enter effect soon. States have already announced challenges in court. "At the behest of industry, the administration has endorsed the continued poisoning of children and pregnant women." J.R. Pegg. ENS. 16 March 2005.

[Challenging mercury rules, Mass. among 9 states to sue EPA](#) Nine states filed suit against the federal government yesterday challenging new rules that they say do not protect children and expectant mothers from dangers posed by mercury emissions

from power plants. The suit criticizes rules announced by EPA as failing to do all the Clean Air Act requires. Angela Delli Santi. [Boston Globe](#). 30 March 2005.

[Nine States Sue EPA Seeking Tougher Mercury Rule](#) [Environment News Service](#). 31 March 2005.

[E.P.A. Sued Over Mercury in the Air](#) [Registration required]. Anthony DePalma. [New York Times](#). 30 March 2005.

[N.J. blasts new federal mercury rules](#) Todd Bates. [Asbury Park Press](#), New Jersey. 16 March 2005.

[N.J. gags on new rule to clean up mercury](#) Colleen Diskin. [North Jersey Media Group](#). 16 March 2005.

[Maine to sue EPA over mercury emissions](#) John Richardson. [Portland Press Herald](#), Maine. 29 March 2005.

[Kentucky environmentalists criticize mercury rule](#) Andy Mead. [Lexington Herald Leader](#), Kentucky. 16 March 2005.

[New mercury rules not good enough for Michigan, critics say](#) Sarah Kellogg. [Booth Newspapers](#). 16 March 2005.

[Clearing the air](#) Environmentalists and some in Congress are alleging new EPA rules don't go far enough and will put thousands of unborn babies and children at risk of neurological damage. Yet research that followed pregnant women and their children for 15 years found no evidence the amounts of mercury in fish put children or newborns at risk. Sandy Szwarc/Henry Miller. [Washington Times](#). 29 March 2005.

[Retreat on mercury rules](#) The Bush rule is a huge retreat from earlier, much tougher EPA proposals. Congress has the power, but not will, to force a serious cleanup. All the more reason for New Jersey and other states to carry through on their vows to sue the government. Mercury can cause birth defects, brain damage and developmental disabilities. Editorial. [The Star-Ledger](#), New Jersey. 17 March 2005.

[Half-measure on mercury](#) Mercury is one of the most dangerous substances spewed into the air by coal-burning power plants, but the political appointees who control the U.S. EPA aren't in any particular hurry to curb it. The new mercury rule is a cynical half-measure that endorses "the continued poisoning of children and pregnant women." Editorial. [Toledo Blade](#), Ohio. 28 March 2005.

[Mercury rule too weak](#) The EPA is touting its new rule on mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants as a big step forward in cleaning up the nation's air. Except that the rule could have been made stronger, and the result of refusing to do so could well be a tragedy in which more children, babies and pregnant women will remain at risk longer. Editorial. [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#). 27 March 2005.

[Molly Ivins on Clean Air Rules](#) 1 in 6 American women of childbearing age already has enough mercury in her blood to put a developing fetus at risk. Yet the new EPA "cap and trade" system allows individual power plants to trade emissions credits, so while some states will have less mercury emission, other states will have enormous increases. Molly Ivins. [Wichita Eagle](#), Kansas. 27 March 2005.

[Clear facts about Clear Skies](#) Mercury is a potent neurotoxin. Exposure to small amounts before birth or during childhood can cause permanent neurological damage. Yet 1 in 6 U.S. women of childbearing age now has mercury levels that pose such risks to the fetus. That number nearly doubles for Native American and Asian-American women. Catherine O'Neill. [San Francisco Chronicle](#). 9 March 2005.

[Higher levels of mercury seen polluting region](#) Mercury contamination is more pervasive in New England than researchers previously believed, according to a study. Mercury can damage the developing brains of fetuses and children and can cause a host of physiological and behavioral problems in wildlife. Beth Daley. [Boston Globe](#). 8 March 2005.

[Mercury Study Identifies Problem Spots](#) Associated Press. [Environmental News Network](#). 9 March 2005.

[Trouble seen in levels of mercury](#) Matt Pacenza. [Times Union](#), New York. 9 March 2005.

[New study makes argument for stronger mercury rules](#) EPA is likely to issue a rule on reducing mercury pollution from power plants. The rule as drafted falls short. 45 states have advisories that warn pregnant women, women of childbearing age

and young children not to eat most freshwater fish as mercury in them can cause neurological damage. Editorial. [Portland Press Herald](#), Maine. 10 March 2005.

[Mercury taints mountains](#) A study says New York wildlife is so contaminated it's dangerous. Ten of 13 species of fish analyzed were highly contaminated. People are exposed to mercury primarily by contaminated fish. Mercury can damage brain development, learning and neurological functioning, especially on fetuses and children. Dan Shapley. [Poughkeepsie Journal](#), New York. 14 March 2005.

[Consumers face a balancing act on seafood](#) Seafood lovers are caught between the devil and the deep blue sea after findings about levels of mercury in some fish. Eating seafood is recommended, but on the other hand cautions are issued for women who may become pregnant, pregnant women, nursing mothers and young children. Patricia Mack. [North Jersey Media Group](#). 16 March 2005.

[Good fish, bad fish](#) State officials are telling Alaskans they can eat more locally caught fish than federal agencies advise. Dr. Berner, who has studied mercury levels in Alaska Native women and babies, supports unlimited fish consumption. Fish they eat are generally low in mercury and high in nutrients that support fetal development. Ann Potempa. [Anchorage Daily News](#), Alaska. 1 March 2005.

[Mercury on the rise](#) Most of the fish sold in supermarkets and fish stores in New Jersey contain more mercury than the federal government expects, say the authors of a new study. Mercury is most dangerous to developing fetuses and small children, in whom it can cause developmental delays and lower intelligence. Linda Washburn. [North Jersey Media Group](#). 3 March 2005.

[Merck Misled on Vaccines, Some Say](#) Drug maker Merck & Co. continued to supply infant vaccine containing a mercury-based preservative for two years after declaring that it had eliminated the chemical. More than 4,200 claims have been filed by parents alleging that their children suffered autism or other neurological disorders from mercury in their shots. Myron Levin. [Los Angeles Times](#). 7 March 2005.

[Bill aims for strict vaccine warning](#) Erica McPhee says that her 3 1/2-year-old son "was the perfect baby" until he was immunized with vaccines containing the preservative thimerosal, which contains mercury. McPhee joined three lawmakers in supporting a bill that would force the state to educate the public about thimerosal. Paul Carrier. [Portland Press Herald](#) Maine. 16 March 2005.

[Mercury's impact is tough to measure](#) Mercury can cause serious health problems, from lung damage to birth defects and even death. But those conditions can be subtle and often take time to develop, making it difficult to establish links to any one cause. That's why there are no Indiana-specific statistics on the number of people affected by mercury exposure. Diana Penner. [Indiana Star](#). 16 March 2005.

[The Risks, Exposure Tests And Cleanup of Mercury](#) Mercury, a silver-colored liquid metal, evaporates into an odorless, colorless gas. If inhaled or absorbed over time, these toxic vapors can damage the brain, central nervous system and other organs. Children, babies and pregnant women are especially at risk. [Registration required]. Debbi Wilgoren. [Washington Post](#). 4 March 2005.

[Out of sight, out of mind](#) Several household products contain mercury, whose vapors are harmful. When a break occurs in certain thermometers, thermostats, switches under car hoods, even old sneakers with the lights, fumes can cause neurological problems and children's immune systems are especially vulnerable. [Purchase required]. Steve DeGrush. [Ionia Sentinel-Standard](#), Michigan. 16 March 2005.

[Pitt researchers tackle mercury problem](#) Pulling mercury out of power plant emissions won't do much good if it later escapes from landfills and waste ponds, researchers say. They have developed a process that locks up mercury by converting it to cinnabar, an ore. Mercury in high enough doses causes developmental problems in fetuses and children. Brian Bowling. [Pittsburg Tribune-Review](#). 16 March 2005.

[Mercury controls approved by Senate committee](#) The Senate Natural Resources Committee on Friday passed a bill limiting the sale and disposal of mercury-containing products. "I think we have done what is defensible and defensible." Mercury is a toxic metal which can damage the nervous system and organs, especially of small children and fetuses. Louis Porter. Times Argus, Vermont. 14 March 2005.

[House panel weighs mercury pollution](#) Concerned that relaxed federal standards for mercury pollution will weaken state standards, Rep. Peter Wirth, D-Santa Fe, asked for approval of a bill for the state to maintain current regulations, regardless of changes at the national level. Mercury is a neurotoxin, especially harmful to unborn and newborn children. Roger Snodgrass. Los Angeles Monitor. 10 March 2005.

[Religious Use of Mercury Endangering Latino and Caribbean Communities](#) While mercury contamination caused by coal-fired power plants continues to make headlines, government agencies have glossed over a more direct form of mercury poisoning: the religious use of mercury in Latino communities. Mercury is sprinkled around the home, sometimes near a child's crib. Bush Greenwatch. 29 March 2005.

[McIntosh's mercury menace](#) Mercury concentrations more than a thousand times higher than normal are widespread near roads, driveways, schoolyards, parks and churches in the community of McIntosh. "The main message needs to be about children. Kids live close to the ground. They do a lot of hand-to-mouth activity." Ben Raines & Bill Finch. The Mobile Register, Alabama. 11 March 2005.

[Tests indicate potent form of mercury](#) Ben Raines & Bill Finch. Mobile Register, Alabama. 16 March 2005.

[Schools Moving to Rid Mercury From Labs](#) As mercury spills in schools disrupt classes, teachers and environmental groups want to rid student labs of the versatile but dangerous metal. In recent weeks, mercury was found in stairwells and corridors of a high school in Washington DC. RedNova News. 7 March 2005.

[Mercury ban in schools reissued](#) D.C. school officials next week expect to begin their top-to-bottom search for mercury in city schools, as federal investigators yesterday scoured Cardozo High School for the toxic chemical. Officials with the EPA said workers found mercury-contaminated clothing and shoes in three lockers at the school. Denise Barnes. The Washington Times. 11 March 2005.

## **(e) Fire retardants**

[Bills protect children's health](#) PBDEs are a class of chemical compounds used as flame retardants in many products to inhibit the ignition and spread of flames. The problem is that PBDEs are persistent toxic chemicals: They remain for long periods of time, are highly toxic. Of special concern are fetal exposures and breast milk supply. Barry Lawson & Judy Huntington. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. 31 March 2005.

[U.S. Study Finds High Blood Levels of Flame Retardant](#) Levels of flame retardants called PBDEs in blood samples taken from Americans have increased dramatically since the 1970s, according to a report. Women had higher PBDE levels than men, and increasing levels of PBDEs have also been found in recent samples of human breast milk. HealthDay News. 22 March 2005.

[Health activists fan flames of protest against common fire-stopping chemicals](#) Montana's Legislature is in the middle of a debate with a resolution aimed at discouraging use of PBDEs. Animal studies have shown them to be neurodevelopmental toxins. Testing of women's breast milk in the region and Montana has shown evidence of PBDEs. Richard Ecke. Great Falls Tribune, Montana. 15 March 2005.

[Study Finds High Toxins in Wash. Fish](#) A study has found that fish in the Spokane River have the highest concentrations of toxic flame retardants of any freshwater fish in Washington state. PBDEs are chemicals that build up in fish tissue and in the

human body, including the breast milk of nursing mothers. They can cause neurological damage in babies. AP. [Yahoo](#). 29 March 2005.

### **(f) Rocket Fuel**

[Dangerous fuel in environment](#) A university study found the toxic rocket fuel chemical perchlorate in all 36 samples of breast milk taken from nursing mothers in 18 states. The levels measured would expose infants to concentrations of perchlorate higher than recommended as safe by the National Academy of Sciences. [Littleton Independent](#), Massachusetts. 3 March 2005.

[Breast milk toxin study troubles nursing moms](#) Breast milk provides special nutrients that help infants ward off infections, allergies and childhood cancer, and even cavities, diabetes and multiple sclerosis later in life. Yet breast milk also contains toxic chemicals. Researchers found the rocket fuel ingredient perchlorate in samples of breast milk nationwide. Sara Shipley. [Saint Louis Post-Dispatch](#). 13 March 2005.

[U.S. study finds chemical in Jerseyans' breast milk](#) Concern about perchlorate has intensified among state regulators after a national study that found high levels of the toxic chemical in breast milk from two nursing mothers in New Jersey. Perchlorate can cause mental retardation in children and thyroid problems in adults. Alexander Lane. [The Star-Ledger](#), New Jersey. 10 March 2005.

### **(3) WATER AND SANITATION**

[Lack of safe water kills over 4,000 kids daily](#) Some 400 million children in Africa and other parts of the world - or one fifth of all children - lack the bare minimum of safe water they need to have healthy lives, according to UNICEF Executive Director. Everywhere, low availability of safe water goes hand-in-hand with high child mortality rates. [Subscription required]. [PANAPress](#). 21 March 2005.

[Water Worries Start to Gain Attention](#) Even though over 2.4 billion people got access to safe drinking water in the past 20 years, an estimated 1.7 billion people still lack it. 2.6 billion lack basic sanitation. About 1.8 million, mostly children, die from diarrhea and related diseases each year; many deaths could be prevented. [Subscription required]. David Wessel. [Wall Street Journal](#). 10 March 2005.

[Water pollution termed biggest killer](#) Water pollution is the biggest killer in Pakistan as water-born diseases are causing 60 per cent infant mortality. Speaking at a lecture on "A Fine Balance Threat to Biodiversity in Pakistan", University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences' Prof Dr Manzoor, called for creating awareness about clean environment and hazards of pollution. [Lahore News](#). 16 March 2005.

[Access to safe water a priority as the UN marks the beginning of International Decade](#) As the Decade "Water for Life" begins, the UN and Governments are seeking to galvanise efforts to meet targets of halving the number of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015. We need to free women and girls from the chore of hauling water. Press Release. [UN](#). 17 March 2005.

[United Nations Marks World Water Day](#) The UN says more than 1.1 billion people around the world lack safe water and 2.4 billion have no access to sanitation, leading to over 3 million deaths every year. "We need to free women and girls from the daily chore of hauling water, often over great distances," Kofi Annan said. Erica Bulman. [Associated Press](#). 22 March 2005.

[WHO boss urges greater action on safe, clean water supply](#) In a statement to mark "International Decade for Action: Water for Life 2005-2025," WHO Director General said clean water is indispensable to sustain life. Every week diarrhea disease due to easily preventable causes claimed the lives of 30,000 people, most of them young children. [Subscription required]. [PANAPress](#). 21 March 2005.

[World Water Day - Growing Scarcity of Fresh Water Supplies](#) World Water Day is a special occasion to remind everyone of

the extreme importance of water. In the world today, 6,000 children die each year from water-borne diseases, which makes unsafe water the greatest personal security threat in the poor countries. Barrister Harun ur Rashid. [Dhaka Courier](#). 18 March 2005.

[40 Nepali kids die daily of water borne diseases: UNICEF](#) Some 40 children die each day of diarrhea and other water borne diseases in Nepal, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said in Kathmandu Tuesday. "In Nepal, access to clean water and sanitation are also critically important to the health of children," UNICEF Representative to Nepal Dr. Suomi Sakai said. [Xinhua](#). 22 March 2005.

[UN And Angola Launch 'Health Days' Campaign to Reduce High Child Mortality](#) With child mortality in post-conflict Angola being among the highest in the world, some 5,000 newly trained municipal health activists are spreading the word to parents. "Parents need to understand that hygiene practices in the homes can often change the fate of children," UN News Service. [AllAfrica.com](#). 14 March 2005.

[400 million Africans lack access to clean water](#) Over 400 million Africans have no access to potable water, according to a report issued at the opening here of a meeting of the African Water Company (AAE). According to the document, over half of the African population is exposed to water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea, Schistosomiasis and malaria. [Panafrican News Agency](#). 14 March 2005.

[Stagnant water holds new peril](#) Pools of standing water, from stopped-up culverts to swimming pool covers, are choice breeding grounds for mosquitoes, potential agents of the West Nile virus. Last year in San Diego County the virus was diagnosed in two people, two horses and 34 birds. One of the victims was a 5-year-old girl. Elizabeth Fitzsimmons. [San Diego Union-Tribune](#). 10 March 2005.

#### **(4) MALARIA**

[Deadly malaria infects half a billion](#) Over half a billion people-nearly double previous estimates-were infected by the deadliest form of malaria in 2002. Malaria claims 1 million lives a year in sub-Saharan Africa alone, mostly children under five. Control depends on safe water, efficient public health measures, education, up-to-date drugs and bednets. Tim Radford. [The Guardian](#), London. 10 March 2005.

[The forgotten killer](#) [Purchase required]. Steve Connor. [The Independent](#), London. 10 March 2005.

[Malaria may be a bigger killer than Aids, hidden figures reveal](#) Mark Henderson. [The Times](#), London. 10 March 2005.

[Factfile on malaria](#) Malaria was eliminated from temperate climates by the mid-20th century, although experts fear a comeback through global warming. Malaria can kill by destroying red blood cells. The young, elderly and pregnant women and their foetus are most at risk. [Agence-France Presse](#). 9 March 2005.

[Africa's top artists stage anti-malaria concert](#) Africa's top musicians star in a concert in Dakar to fight malaria, a disease which kills one child every 30 seconds on the continent. Artists will become advocates in their home countries, recording public service announcements in local languages. The concert is organised by the (UN) Roll Back Malaria campaign. [ABC News](#). 13 March 2005.

[Wolfowitz's Challenge](#) Having a neoconservative run the World Bank could be good news for millions of people around the world at risk from a preventable and curable disease: malaria. The disease blights the future of millions of young people who, if they survive the disease, suffer from learning difficulties, limiting their economic prospects. Richard Tren/Roger Bate. [National Review](#). 29 March 2005.

#### **(5) MISCELLANEOUS**

[Experts begin talks on health initiatives today](#) Forty-five experts from countries from the eastern Mediterranean region of

WHO will gather for four days to review lessons learned from implementing the Health and Environment Linkages Initiative (HELI) and the Children Environmental Health Indicators Initiative (CEHI) in the region. Ahmad Hijjawi. [Jordan Times](#). 28 March 2005.

[The End Of Poverty](#) In a world of plenty, 1 billion people are so poor, their lives are in danger. Sachs proposes 9 steps to change that. Providing clean water and sanitation: With enough water points and latrines for the safety of the entire village, women and children would save countless hours of toil each day fetching water. [Subscription required]. Jeffery D. Sachs. [Time Magazine](#). 6 March 2005.

[Africa deserves help](#) Tony Blair has declared that African poverty and climate change will be at the centre of the G8 Summit. These may seem to be distinct issues. In fact, they are linked. In the Tigre region of Ethiopia the rain cycle has changed markedly in recent years. Hunger is omnipresent. Perhaps half the children are severely underweight. Jeffrey Sachs. [Mail & Guardian](#), South Africa. 16 March 2005.

[Poverty leads 10 million children to an early grave](#) About 10.6m children under five die each year, most from preventable causes, WHO advisers estimate. Almost 4 in 10 die within 28 days of birth. The figures called for huge injections of aid to improve health. The deaths are mainly from pneumonia (19%), diarrhoea (17%), malaria (8%). James Meikle. [The Guardian](#), London. 25 March 2005.

[Six diseases cause 73 percent of child deaths –WHO](#) Six mainly preventable diseases account for 73 percent of child deaths each year, the World Health Organisation said on Friday. Pneumonia accounts for 19 percent of the under-fives who die, followed by diarrhoea, pre-term delivery, malaria, blood infection and lack of oxygen at birth. [Reuters](#). 25 March 2005.

[Study provides detailed look at what kills world's children](#) [Purchase required]. Andre Picard. [Globe & Mail](#), Canada. 25 March 2005.

[Report highlights plight of African children](#) At least one in 6 children in sub-Saharan Africa die before age 5, according to a 'Save the Children' report. Most succumbed to preventable or treatable diseases, such as malaria and pneumonia. The agency attributed deaths to the failure to deliver sustainable development in Africa and to put children at the centre of policy. UN/OCHA. [IRIN News](#). 11 March 2005.

[Viral diseases spread fast in city](#) Viral and waterborne diseases, especially typhoid and hepatitis, are spreading alarmingly affecting mainly children and teenagers. Experts blame the spread on poor environmental state, caused by air pollution, fluctuating temperature, overcrowding and lack of hygiene awareness among the people. Nurul Islam Hasib. [The Independent](#), Bangladesh. 8 March 2005.

[Damage to ecosystems poses growing threat to human health](#) A report shows that some 60% of the benefits that the global ecosystem provides to support life on Earth (fresh water, clean air, etc.) are being degraded. Scientists warn that harmful consequences of this degradation to human health are already being felt and could grow significantly worse over the next 50 years. [Kashar News](#). 30 March 2005.

[Scientists paint grim picture of Earth's future](#) [Registration required]. Seth Borenstein. [Philadelphia Inquirer](#). 30 March 2005.  
[Panel sounds ecosystem alarm](#) [Aljazeera Net](#). 30 March 2005.

[Celebrating Women as Custodians of the Environment](#) 2005 will go down as the year in which the role of women in respect to the environment and the environment's role in delivering gender equality moved to the centre of political life. MDGs, including poverty eradication, supply of drinking water, environment and education, are crucially important for women and girls. Klaus Toepfer. [UNEP](#). 8 March 2005.

[World's women see modest progress at UN Beijing + 10](#) "The full and effective implementation" of the Beijing action plan

"is essential to achieve the internationally agreed development goals," including cutting poverty by half by 2015, universal access to primary education, reduction of infant mortality; and improving women's health. Herve Couturier. Agence France-Presse. 6 March 2005.

Tsunami's legacy includes airborne toxins Regions hit by the tsunami have been seriously contaminated by saltwater, bacteria and even nuclear waste, says a report released by UNEP. It says the tsunami stirred nuclear and other hazardous waste that had previously been illegally dumped along the coast of Somalia and this waste is affecting the health of locals. Ochieng'Ogodo. SciDevNet. 3 March 2005.

Tsunami's hazardous legacy An assessment of the environmental devastation wreaked by the tsunami predicts that rehabilitating the area may take 10 years and cost over \$10 billion. Measures are needed to clean up contaminated groundwater; remove and treat hazardous waste; and rebuild infrastructure, including wells and sewage systems. Maria Burke. Environmental Science & Technology. 30 March 2005.

U.N. official praises expo The Aichi Expo presents an excellent opportunity to promote greater recognition of the importance of caring for the environment, according to UNEP. "Children are suffering most from environmental problems. Their life in the future depends on the possibility to have services from the environment still available. Cameron McLauchlan. Daily Yomiuri, Japan. 27 March 2005.

UNEP 2005 Children's World Summit Goes To Japan The 2005 Children's World Summit on the Environment will take place in the Japanese city of Aichi in July. An estimated 1,000 people from about 100 countries are expected to take part in the event. "Children are the future and that future must be a sustainable one." [Subscription required]. PANAPress. 29 March 2005.

O.C. Is Up for Role in Child Study Orange County is in the running to be one of the first 8 areas nationwide to participate in a study of how environmental surroundings affect the health of children. The National Children's Study will monitor the health of about 100,000 children from before birth until they turn 21. [Registration required]. Claudia Zequeira. Los Angeles Times. 16 March 2005.

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