

HECANET September 2004

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ARTICLES

Children's environmental health issues received wide coverage throughout September, particularly with the release of certain studies and conferences that caught the media's attention, including on: the long-term effects of air pollution on children's lungs; the vulnerability of children to pesticide poisoning (particularly poor children); the link between pesticides and childhood leukemia; the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; fire retardants in breast milk; and new WHO drinking water guidelines. There were also quite a few articles on the effects of the quality of indoor air (at home and at school); and outdoor air (vehicle pollution, including diesel/school bus emissions) on childhood asthma rates. Childhood lead poisoning was the subject of a number of articles (from paint, school water, industrial smelter, toys, and candy sources). Mercury also continued to receive attention (from coal fired power stations, fish and vaccines sources). Articles also addressed the health of children affected by

natural disasters (in Haiti, Jamaica and Bangladesh). 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**
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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

The Healthy Environments for Children Alliance Steering Group meets in November in Washington to review progress and develop a plan of implementation for the coming year. Steering group members will discuss inter-alia HECA's role in: information sharing and dissemination, global advocacy and communications, policy and action at country level, and the development of tools and resources/capacity building. Relevant background documentation for the meeting will be posted on [HECA's website](#) and in the next edition of HECANET.

(2) UNEP – Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

The second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a [Strategic Approach to International Chemicals](#)

[Management](#) ("SAICM PrepCom2") will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, at the United Nations compound in Gigiri, from 4 to 8 October 2004. Among the issues being considered is chemical safety and children, including assessment and monitoring of particularly vulnerable populations, in particular children, pregnant and fertile women and the elderly.

(3) UNICEF/WHO – MDG Drinking Water and Sanitation Target Progress Report

UNICEF and WHO have issued a new publication entitled [Meeting the MDG Drinking Water and Sanitation Target: A mid-term assessment of progress](#) (August 2004): In adopting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that address the most pressing development issues, countries pledged to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Yet, more than 1 billion people today lack safe drinking water, and some 2.6 billion - half of the developing world - lack improved sanitation. Everyday, this unremitting but seemingly invisible disaster claims the lives of more than 3,900 children under five, according to WHO. And for every child that dies, countless others, including older children and adults, suffer from poor health, diminished productivity and missed opportunities for education. This publication reports on progress towards the MDG goal of ensuring environmental sustainability. It seeks to encourage countries slow to meet the target to accelerate action, and highlights areas where efforts need to be strengthened in order to meet the goal.

(4) The Healthy Children Conference, Chernivtsy, Ukraine

The Healthy Children Conference will take place on 30 September – 1 October, 2004 in Chernivtsy (Ukraine) at the Bucovinian Medical Academy Conference Center. The Conference Program Committee invites abstracts. The conference will provide several opportunities for presentations by participants and poster sessions. Topics include: children health, growth and development; problems of adaptation newborns and infants; developmental nutrition guidelines; and environmental health of children. Please contact: Head of Department of Developmental Pediatrics, Bukovinian State Medical Academy, Professor Yuriy Nechitailo E-mail - chernivtsi2002@yandex.ru, pediatr2@msa.cv.ua [Bukovinian State Medical Academy On-line](#)

(5) International Society of Doctors for the Environment Latin America (ISDE.LA)

As part of the program on CEH for Latin America, the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) America Latina and the International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety, (INCHES) are co-organizing (a) with the Peruvian Society of Pediatrics a Pre-congress Training Workshop for Pediatricians: "Environmental threats to children's health", in the framework of the activities of the XXIII Peruvian Congress of Pediatrics, in the City of Trujillo, Peru, October 14th, 2004; (b) with the Paraguayan Society of Pediatrics the Pre-congress Training Workshop for Pediatricians: "Children and Environment: a vulnerable population at risk", in the framework of the activities of the IX Paraguayan Congress of Pediatrics City of Asunción, Paraguay, October 17th, 2004. More information can be found on the web-site of the [Argentinean Society of Doctors for the Environment](#). (AAMMA).

AAMMA will lecture on ‘Children’s Health and sustainable development: children’s environmental safety’ for professors and pupils as part of the celebrations of the 100th Anniversary of the Department of Health Sciences of the High Institute of the Superior College Joaquín V. González, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on October 12th, 2004.

AAMMA-ISDE.LA will lecture on “Children Chemical Safety IFCS IV Forum Recommendations” and “Toxic chemicals in neurodevelopment” at a workshop on “Social Corporate Responsibility: Environment and Health” organized by Estudio Argento, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on October 20th, 2004.

AAMMA-ISDE.LA will co-organize a panel on “Environment and Child Health: Problems and interventions in the community” at the 3rd Argentinean Congress of General Pediatrics and 1st Working Day of Pediatric Nursery to the Congress, organized by the Argentinean Society of Pediatrics, SAP in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 17 to 20 November, 2004. The topics to be presented by the panel will be “Chemical Safety: Toxic on neurodevelopment: lead, mercury and PCBs”, “Environmental threats: where children play, learn and work” and “Special vulnerability of children to environmental risk” .This congress is bringing together near 5000 pediatrician of the South Cone region.

AAMMA-ISDE.LA is organizing a panel on ‘Health Care Without Harm’. The topics to be presented are: “Health Impacts caused by the medical industry”, “Toxic exposure on hospitalized children” and “Sustainable hospitals: Clean alternatives”, during a workshop on “Environment, Safety and Occupational Health at Health Care Institutions”, organized by University Hospital CEMIC (Center of Medical Studies and Clinic Research) and Forum 14.000, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 25th, 2004.

(6) Policy Interpretation Network on Children's Health and Environment (PINCHES) Meetings

[PINCHE Meetings](#): Workpackages 1 to 6 will meet in Prague on 19 and 20 October 2004. In these meetings the evaluation process of the literature will be discussed, as well as the further process of coming to policy recommendations for the selected topics. The meetings are hosted by Dr. Radim Sram and will take place in the Institute of Experimental Medicine in Prague. The meetings are open for all interested people. The Workpackage meetings will be planned in two parallel sessions, starting at Tuesday 19 October at 1 pm. More practical information will follow on the [PINCHE web-site](#). For more information on PINCHE and its activities, please see the [PINCHE newsletter](#).

(7) International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE)

ISDE will be presenting on the topic of , "Public-Private Partnerships for Human Health and the Environment" at the 12th

International Conference of [The Greening of Industry Network \(GIN2004\)](#) at Hong Kong University (November 7-10, 2004). The program will highlight ISDE's expertise in delivering technical training, education and awareness-raising on the subject of Children's Health and the Environment, including cooperative efforts with International Organizations, Local Government and appropriate private sector organizations.

(8) Philippines: 'train the trainers' children's environmental health workshop

The Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, University of the Philippines will hold a 'train the trainers' workshop on children's environmental health in the Philippines on November 28-30, 2004. It is part of a series of meetings to be held in the Philippines which begins with the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety Asia Pacific Regional Meeting November 22-23, followed by the 4th International Meeting of the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Toxicology (APAMT) hosted by the Philippine Society of Clinical and Occupational Toxicology from November 24-26 and then the CEH 'train the trainer's' workshop. In all these meetings with emphasis will be on children's chemical safety, and healthy settings including basic rights of the child to chemical free, safe and clean drinking water.

(9) International Conference on Childhood Exposures to Environmental Chemicals (Cardiff, UK)

The Health Protection Agency UK will be hosting the [7th International Conference on Chemical Hazards](#) from 7-8 December at the Hilton Cardiff in Wales, UK. The central theme of this year's conference is 'Childhood Exposures to Environmental Chemicals: Implications for Public Health'. The focus will be on: the broad principles of paediatric toxicology, the precautionary principle, indoor and outdoor air pollution, hazardous environments, water pollution and contaminated land, waste disposal, childhood poisoning, emergency planning and preparedness, and policy development and implementation. Details of the programme will be posted in due course. For further information, please contact the [Conference Administrator](#).

(10) Children's World Summit for the Environment (UNEP)

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.

(11) Healthy Schools Network, Inc.

The Healthy Schools Network, Inc., a USA-based not for profit advocacy group dedicated to ensuring every child an environmentally safe and healthy school, has coordinated the development and publication of a [National Position Statement 2004](#), calling for federal, state, and local actions to address school environmental health concerns. The Position Statement 2004 was released with participants of the national ad hoc Coalition for Healthier Schools with concurrent press events in twelve states, on National Healthy Schools Day, April 19, 2004. The Statement is now helping local organizations to shape discussions and activities in their own states and cities; it also formed the basis for a presentation to the 34th Annual Legislative Conference of the US Congressional Black Caucus in the nation's capitol in September 2004.

(12) Improving Kids' Environment (Indiana, US)

Improving Kids' Environment, an American non-profit, advocacy coalition that facilitates tangible and significant improvements to children's health through reductions in environmental threats to children, has issued its [September 2004 newsletter about children's environmental health in Indiana](#). Topics include: Asthma Plan Due in December; Mercury Rulemaking Petition for Power Plants; Lead and Healthy Homes; Indiana School Air Quality Board Needs Refocusing; EQSC Fails to Consider School Drinking Water; Asthma and Schools; and a Toolkit for Community-Based Organizations to Check Retail Stores.

ARTICLES

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

[Home Environment Changes May Relieve Asthma](#) "We have shown that you can make a difference in the inner-city indoor environment that improves the health of children with asthma. These findings are important because children who live in the inner city suffer an excess burden of illness and even death due to asthma," according to the author of a study. Charnicia E. Huggins. [Reuters](#). 8 September 2004.

[Disarming asthma - Chronic disease's triggers lurk in schools and at home](#) More than 14 million school days are lost annually to asthma. Triggers, such as mold, dust and strong fumes, affect the airways of children with asthma, setting off attacks. Christine V. Baird, [Star Ledger](#), New Jersey, 7 September 2004.

[Helping your kids breathe easier](#) Asthma attacks occur after exposure to environmental allergens (i.e. animal dander, mold and pollen), irritants (i.e. cigarette smoke, strong odors or air pollution), viral infections and some medications. A new study

shows that parents often fail to take certain beneficial steps. January W. Payne. The Washington Post, 16 September 2004.

[Safe at home? Maybe not](#) The results of a recent study indicate that exposure to air pollution can adversely affect growth of lung function in 10- to 18-year-olds. Research has shown that air inside homes and other buildings can be more polluted than air outside. Other research shows that people are indoors about 90 percent of the time. Kate Coleman. The Herald Mail, Maryland. 26 September 2004.

[Asthma cases increase sixfold in 30 years in Japan](#) An increasing number of children are suffering from bronchial asthma in Japan. The number of cases has increased sixfold in the past 30 years. Experts point out that modern draft-free houses, heaters and other developments in housing have helped dust mites grow in number. Masaharu Asaba. The Yomiuri Shimbun, Japan. 30 September 2004.

[Activist pushes for school air cleanliness](#) What do you do if your child's school makes her sick? "Unhealthy and unsafe schools endanger and disenfranchise children, who have different metabolisms than adults," she said. "The key to reducing preventable illness and disabilities is clean air, clean water, clean energy, and safe food." Joan Millman, Globe Correspondent, Boston. 23 September 2004.

[Our schools shape kids' minds but neglect their bodies](#) Many schools are old, and have poor air quality and mould. A lot of schools were built in an era when lead pipes and asbestos were staples of construction. Many schools are overcrowded and poorly ventilated, making them hotbeds for disease transmission. Andre Picard. The Globe and Mail, Canada. 9 September 2004. [Registration required]

[US donation to help lower rural pollution](#) Three western rural areas may benefit from grants donations from the US Government to reduce indoor air pollution from household energy use. The traditional stoves or heating systems there work by burning coal, especially high arsenic coal, which gives off thick poisonous smokes. Wu Chong. China Daily. 21 September 2004.

(b) Outdoor air pollution

[Study links vehicle pollution, children's health](#) Children living and attending school in areas with high levels of vehicle pollution had significant increases in bronchitis and asthma, according to research. "Our findings support the hypothesis that traffic-related pollution is associated with respiratory symptoms in children," the authors wrote. Katherine Bouma. The

Birmingham News, Alabama. 1 September 2004.

[Air pollution may put teens at risk for earlier death](#) New research shows that teenagers who grow up in heavy air pollution have reduced lung capacity, putting them at risk for illness and premature death as adults. In the longest study to date of pollution's effect on developing lungs, researchers followed children raised in communities around Los Angeles. Linda A. Johnson. Associated Press. 8 September 2004.

[Smog Harms Children's Lungs for Life, Study Finds](#) Eight years of research yield the most definitive evidence yet that dirty air stunts lung growth. The lung damage is serious enough to lead to a lifetime of health problems and, in some cases, premature death, the research found. Miguel Bustillo. Los Angeles Times. 9 September 2004.

[Kids Face Danger in the Air](#) Everyone knows smog makes breathing harder. But the findings by USC researchers published Thursday in the *New England Journal of Medicine* showed it can also impair children's lungs for life. Air pollution — specifically, particulates — doesn't just make ailments worse, it can create them. Editorial. Los Angeles Times. 10 September 2004.

[Exposed to pollutions, kids' lungs show later function loss](#) Many children exposed to polluted air have poorly developed lungs at 18, a deficit that may put them at risk for respiratory illness and other health problems later in life. The study suggests that daily exposure to polluted air could leave teens with lungs that will never function the way they should. Kathleen Fackelmann, USA Today. 8 September 2004.

[The legacy of smog](#) Growing up in smoggy communities stunts lung development for a lifetime, researchers who have followed children in Southern California for more than a decade conclude in a landmark study. The research, appearing in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, answers a long-standing question about the chronic effects of breathing dirty air. Edie Lau. The Sacramento Bee. 9 September 2004.

[Air Pollution Retards Teen Lung Growth – Study](#) In the first long-term study of air pollution's effects on children, researchers reported that contaminated air stunts lung development in teenagers and the effects could extend well into adulthood. The findings show that existing pollution controls in many parts of the United States are inadequate. Gene Emery. Reuters. 8 September 2004.

[Pollution's Long-Term Effects on Pre-Teens' Lungs](#) A study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* this week indicates that

current levels of air pollution have chronic adverse effects on lung development in children aged 10 to 18. The large study's authors conclude that the exposure leads to clinically significant deficits in adult lung function. Richard Harris. National Public Radio. 8 September 2004.

[Air pollution stunts teens' lung development](#) Contaminated air stunts lung development in teenagers and the effects could extend well into adulthood. Researchers, who followed 1759 children in 12 southern California communities, said pollution was probably having a similar effect on children elsewhere. Reuters. New Zealand Herald. 13 September 2004.

[Losing ground on the environment](#) Researchers at the University of Southern California published a study last week detailing the heavy toll dirty air takes on the still-developing lungs of children. The findings suggest that the smog settled over the nation's largest cities will leave many urban kids with significantly diminished lung capacity throughout adulthood. Opinion. Minnesota Daily. 14 September 2004.

[Doing better on clean air](#) A major research project tracking children for nearly a decade reveals that kids who live in areas of more polluted air suffer significant lung damage that can hound them for the remainder of their lives. The project, was the largest of its kind, studying the health effects of bad air on nearly 1,800 children in California cities. Opinion. Santa Maria Times, California. 29 September 2004.

[Report: Kids at steep risk from bad air](#) Los Angeles children playing outside were at high risk of breathing unhealthy air one out of five days over the last three summers, according to a report. Children with asthma, who are much more sensitive to air pollution, were at risk of worsening their disease on nearly half of the summer days from 2001 to 2003. Kerry Cavanaugh L.A. Daily News. 21 September 2004.

[Study: Smog in some California areas among worst for children; San Diego 50th](#) The report shows that children who live in those areas are more susceptible to air pollutants that trigger asthma than other kids. The study looks at the number of days with high air quality index values and the number of children affected. Associated Press. San Diego Union Tribune. 20 September 2004.

[Schools closed as smog blankets Indonesian city](#) Choking haze from forest and ground fires in Indonesia's Sumatra island has forced authorities in one city to close schools for a few days, an official said Friday. The instruction to close schools was taken so that the children do not leave their home and get less exposure to the smoke. Agence France-Presse. Terra Daily. 10 September 2004.

[Gov't to track 12,000 pupils in 5-year study on air pollution, asthma](#) The Environment Ministry has decided to begin a five-year survey on 12,000 elementary schoolchildren in fiscal 2005 to study the causal relationship between asthma and air pollution from car emissions, ministry officials said Wednesday. The large-scale national survey will be the first of its kind in Japan. Kyodo. 29 September 2004.

[Hearing woes? Blame the city's air](#) More than an estimated 80,000 people in Delhi are suffering from various degrees of hearing impairment. Culprit number one is air pollution and the associated upper respiratory tract infections. Experts say the lack of awareness about the easy transmission of throat infections to the ear causes the most damage, especially in children. Times of India, 16 September 2004.

[Study: One-fourth of area lives with high diesel levels](#) About 460,000 people in Greater Cincinnati live in areas with high levels of diesel pollution, putting them at greater risk of developing asthma, cancer and other health problems McLennan advises minimizing the time that children spend outside when school buses are arriving or departing. Matt Leingang. Enquirer, Cincinnati. 28 September 2004.

[Clean Bus Program to reduce harmful emissions](#) City school buses to be retrofitted to relieve students' asthma. "We're seeing more and more health impacts of diesel emissions-there is more pressure on us to ensure that our children have a healthy environment at all times - Exposure to exhaust is a very serious concern," said the regional EPA administrator. Sarah Mishkin. Yale Daily News. 15 September 2004.

[SAD 27 adds emission-control mufflers to bus fleet](#) Exposure to diesel exhaust can trigger asthma symptoms and other respiratory ailments. Asthma affects 13% of Maine children. Young people are more sensitive to air pollution because their lungs are still developing and they breathe at a faster rate than adults. Bangor Daily News, Maine. 10 September 2004.

[Clean Air Ride](#) While reducing pollution from school buses is a noble, but certainly not novel, cause, there are much bigger steps the federal government can take to clean the air in Maine. These include mercury and other air pollutants and global climate change. Bangor Daily News, Maine. 21 September 2004.

[EPA chief visits Maine to tout green school buses](#) The nation's top environmental official on Tuesday said Maine is a national model in its efforts to reduce diesel school bus emissions. Clarke Canfield. Associated Press. 21 September 2004.

[No more stinking school bus smoke?](#) Biodiesel fuel more costly, but cleaner burning alternative for buses. It is a good alternative to reduce emissions on buses. Less emissions mean cleaner air, especially for children who ride one of the Portage township's buses back and forth to school each day. Joyce Rissell. Northwest Indiana Times, 3 September 2004.

[Districts receive funds to improve bus pollution](#) Nineteen school districts throughout the state have received funds to decrease the amount of pollution emitted by their school buses. "To me, being around all of these kids, it's better for them and the environment," said Tom Heidenreich, supervisor of transportation. Rebecca Loda. [Pantagraph.com](#), Central Illinois. 16 September 2004.

[Women Near Twin Towers Had Smaller Babies, Study Finds](#) Babies born to women who were pregnant and living near the World Trade Center when the Sept. 11 attacks occurred were smaller and had shorter gestation periods than those whose mothers lived elsewhere in New York, according to a study published Wednesday. [Registration required]. Marla Cone. [Los Angeles Times](#). 9 September 2004.

[U.S. report sees wide health effects of 9-11 attacks](#) Most of the health problems reported after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks have involved respiratory difficulties and mental distress, according to a U.S. government report published on Wednesday. A separate study showed subtle but significant effects on pregnant women and their babies. Maggie Fox. [Reuters](#). 8 September 2004.

[Air pollution hits Hispanics hardest, group says](#) Health and public interest groups released a report showing that air pollution hits Hispanic communities the hardest. "Mrs. Sanchez misses work because she's having an asthma attack". "Mr. Cervantes' son is missing school because of his asthma". Gary Wisby. Chicago Sun Times. 24 September 2004.

(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General

[Household chemicals linked to kids' asthma](#) The chemical compounds that keep our leftovers fresh and make our floors easy to clean may be a factor in the rising levels of asthma and allergies in children around the world over the past 30 years. Five million U.S. children have asthma. CDC estimates the cost of treating asthma them at \$3.2 billion per year. Elizabeth Weise, [USA Today](#). 30 September 2004.

[Spurred by Illness, Indonesians Lash Out at U.S. Mining Giant](#) Masna Stirman gave birth to a tiny, shriveled girl with small lumps and wrinkled skin - 'the baby has deformities'. The infant's death came after years of complaints by local fishermen

about waste dumped by the owner of a nearby gold mine. [Article must be purchased]. Jane Perlez/Evelyn Rusli. New York Times. 8 September 2004.

[The Cancer Battle](#) Families Against Cancer and Toxins (FACT) is "dedicated to finding the cause of childhood cancers, with the goal of preventing further cases." That translates into outreach, education, support for cancer families, advocacy for prevention and research, and opposition to anything that puts more toxins into the environment. Renee Downing. Tuscon Weekly, Arizona. 16 September 2004.

[High level of PCBs taints Lake Washington fish](#) Some of the most popular fish in Lake Washington contain surprisingly dangerous levels of toxic chemicals called PCBs, state health officials warned anglers to limit their consumption. PCBs are suspected human carcinogens, and consumption of tainted fish has been linked to learning deficits in children. Sandi Doughton. The Seattle Times. 1 September 2004.

[Researchers hope to study effect of PCBs on brain](#) Researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham asked the Anniston school board last week for help in a study of whether PCBs - which were manufactured in Anniston for decades - cause problems with learning, memory and behavior. Associated Press. Times Daily, Northwest Alabama. 27 September 2004.

[Ban on Chemical Used in Toys Made Permanent](#) A temporary Europe-wide ban on chemical softeners used in children's PVC toys was decreed permanent at talks between EU trade ministers. Phthalates are suspected of causing cancer, kidney damage and disruption of the body's hormone system. In children, phthalates increase the risk of asthma and allergies. Geoff Meade. Scotsman. 24 September 2004.

[Teflon mystery raises safety questions](#) A chemical used to make teflon, perfluorooctanoic acid, has been turning up in people and animals worldwide: river otters in Oregon, polar bears in the Canadian Arctic, and in the blood of 96 percent of children tested in 23 states. The health risks are unknown. [Registration required]. Tom Avril. Philadelphia Inquirer. 19 September 2004.

(b) Lead

[Alert over risks of lead poisoning](#) Lead poisoning may be a much greater danger to children's health than has been generally realised, with relatively low levels affecting their intelligence and doing neurological damage, the Health Protection Agency

warned yesterday. The dangers arise when children ingest or inhale tiny flakes of lead paint. Sarah Boseley. The Guardian, London. 14 September 2004.

[Concern over child lead exposure](#) Lead poisoning in children may be a bigger UK public health issue than is currently appreciated, say experts. The Health Protection Agency says more research needs to be done to establish the exact threat. The agency is concerned that even widely accepted safe levels of exposure may pose a risk of neurological damage. BBC, London. 14 September 2004.

[Why lead poisoning is so common in the United Kingdom](#) For the past 5 years Edward Davidson has researched and collected much data on the subject of lead in pre-1960 homes in the UK. It is not surprising that British health experts believe that more children than expected could be suffering from lead poisoning. Medical News Today. 15 September 2004.

[Increase in children's blood lead levels prompt health warning](#) An increase in children's blood lead levels in Port Pirie in South Australia has prompted a renewed push to raise public awareness about the health risk involved. ABC News Online. 9 September 2004.

[Feds fund city lead-removal program](#) Five city neighborhoods at high risk for lead poisoning in children will share \$4.5 million in federal grants to remove lead from homes and educate the public. Lead poisoning can damage a child's central nervous system, kidneys and reproductive system and is associated with decreased intelligence. Merle English. Newsday, New York. 28 September 2004.

[Smelter 'to blame' for children's blood lead levels](#) The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) says a recent rise in children's blood lead levels in Port Pirie in South Australia is a result of increased production at the city's Zinifex smelter. ABC News Online. 15 September 2004.

[Safer water for schools](#) In the wake of revelations of Seattle Public Schools' mishandling of lead concerns, many districts are rechecking the quality of drinking water for their students. There's no known safe level for lead. High blood levels of lead can affect children's mental and emotional development. Editorial Board. Seattle Post Intelligencer. 7 September 2004.

[School water quality remains focus](#) The water dispensers and warning signs reflect the ongoing efforts by the 47,500-student district to cope with a multimillion-dollar problem of lead contamination in school water supplies. Gregory Roberts. Seattle Post Intelligencer. 7 September 2004.

[Getting lead out could cost Seattle schools \\$9.3 million](#) The cost of cleansing Seattle Public Schools' contaminated water could cost \$6.3 million to \$9 million, School Board members heard yesterday. Deborah Bach. Seattle Post Intelligencer. 8 September 2004.

[State to help pay for lead testing in grade schools](#) For the first time, the state will provide money to local school districts to test drinking water for lead contamination, Gov. Gary Locke announced yesterday. The decision was prompted by reports of excessive lead contamination in water from the fountains in Seattle Public Schools. Gregory Roberts. Seattle Post Intelligencer. 9 September 2004.

[Tiny, shiny 'pieces of poison'](#) Despite the dangers, children's jewelry with 1,000 times the amount of lead considered safe is on sale all over Ottawa. A bigger problem? It's not illegal. The Ottawa Citizen. 6 September 2004.

[Toy jewelry may be harmful to children](#) U.S. recalls pieces sold in vending machines; about half have lead Shabazz, director of United Parents Against Lead, an education and advocacy group, said she had the toy ring her daughter got at the dentist office tested. Sure enough, she said, it came back with too-high lead levels. Tammie Smith. Richmond Times Dispatch, Virginia. 16 September 2004.

[State unable to ban candies with lead](#) Though health officials warn that some Mexican candy contains too much lead and can pose threats to children's health, few products are banned from the United States. Blair Craddock, Modesto Bee, California. 20 September 2004.

(c) Pesticides

[Pesticides Serious Health Threat to Children in Developing World](#) Children in the developing world are especially vulnerable to the adverse health effects of pesticide exposure and need special attention, according to a U.N. report, "Child Pesticide Poisoning: Information for Advocacy and Action." Bureau of International Information Programs. U.S. Department of State. 27 September 2004.

[Poor Children Vulnerable to Pesticide Poisoning](#) Children are facing higher risks from pesticides than adults and need greater protection against these chemicals, particularly in developing countries, three UN agencies urge in a new report. As many as five million cases of pesticide poisoning occur each year worldwide. [Subscription required]. Environment News Service. 28

September 2004.

[Pesticides linked to child cancer](#) Pesticides and other pollutants in the environment may contribute to childhood leukaemia, say UK scientists. In laboratory studies the Bristol University team showed pollutants were able to travel across the placenta to the unborn baby. BBC, London. 6 September 2004.

[Childhood Leukaemia on the Increase](#) Leukaemia is the most common cancer in children and, worryingly for families, is on the increase. New research has shown that pesticides and other environmental pollution may affect unborn children and play a role in the cancer's development. Jane Kirby, Press Association, Scotsman.com. 6 September 2004.

[Pesticides May Be Linked to Rising Child Leukaemia](#) Pesticides and other environmental pollution may affect unborn children and play a role in the rising rates of childhood leukaemia, new research, unveiled at the First International Scientific conference on Childhood Leukaemia in London, indicated. Lyndsay Moss and Jennifer Sym. Press Association, Scotsman.com. 6 September 2004

[Link sought between leukemia, pollution](#) Researchers in London are seeking a link to the rise in childhood leukemia and environmental pollutants reaching unborn children in the womb. United Press International. Washington Times. 7 September 2004.

[Environment May Be Linked to Rising Leukemia](#) Pesticides or chemicals in the environment may be behind the steady rise in cases of childhood leukemia, which have increased five-fold since the early 1900s, scientists said. Patricia Reaney. Reuters. 8 September 2004.

[Experts consider evidence of link between the rise in childhood leukaemia and increased light at night](#) The incidence of childhood leukaemia increased dramatically in the twentieth century. The increase has mainly affected the under five age group. Although the causes of leukaemia in children are poorly understood, environmental factors are thought to play a major role. News-Medical.net. 8 September 2004.

[Childhood leukaemia risk doubles within 100 metres of high voltage power lines](#) The biggest ever publicly funded UK study into power lines and child cancer has found that children under the age of 15 living within 100m of high-voltage power lines have close to twice the risk of developing leukaemia. Children aged 0-5 are the most vulnerable. Medical News Today. 15 September 2004.

[Up to 15 hazardous chemicals and pesticides to be added to trade "watch list"](#) The Rotterdam Convention will provide a first line of defense for human health and the environment against the potential dangers of hazardous chemicals and pesticides. The winners created by this new convention will range from subsistence farmers to nursing mothers to wildlife. [UNEP/FAO Press Release](#). 16 September 2004.

[Keeping agricultural chemicals safe](#) Hazardous chemicals and pesticides, which helped to trigger the modern environmental movement in the 1960s, are still today a major source of concern. DDT, mercury, lead and other dangerous substances continue to threaten human health and the environment. [Klaus Töpfer and Jacques Diouf](#), [International Herald Tribune](#). 17 September 2004.

[States seek better antidote to industrial poisons](#) Pesticides and industrial chemicals have poisoned millions of people in recent decades and killed tens of thousands, according to the United Nations. Every human being on Earth carries in his or her body traces of various hazardous chemicals, many of which have been linked to cancer, birth defects and other health problems. [Swissinfo](#). 21 September 2004.

[Treaty curbs trade in toxic chemicals](#) The United Nations on Monday added 14 pesticides and chemicals, including lead additive for petrol, to a growing list of toxic substances in which trade is restricted. This is going to reduce the risk of people's exposure to a number of dangerous chemicals that are still in widespread use. [Reuters](#). 21 September 2004.

[UN: Cash Running Out to Clean Up Pesticide Waste](#) The UN body which helps clear up pesticide waste in developing countries said yesterday cash was running out to reduce the chemical stockpiles which poison millions of people every year. WHO estimates pesticides poison 3 million people every year, and kill 200,000 people - the vast majority of them in the developing world. [Reuters](#). 10 September 2004.

[Use of DDT urged in malaria fight](#) Anti-malaria activists are accusing the U.S. Agency for International Development of being a prisoner of politically correct policies that are inadvertently killing millions of children and pregnant women in Africa. Tom Carter. [Washington Times](#). 16 September 2004.

[Does It Pay To Buy Organic? For pregnant women and children, the benefits are worth the higher price](#) For the most vulnerable groups -- children and pregnant women -- going organic whenever possible for fruits and vegetables that carry the heaviest pesticide load makes sense. Carol Marie Cropper. [Business Week](#). 6 September 2004.

[Revealed: the pesticide threat in 24% of food](#) Pesticides were discovered in a quarter of all food tested in the UK last year, with a third of fruit and vegetable samples containing traces of chemicals used in agriculture. Despite the figures, the Pesticide Residues Committee – which compiled the figures – has played down any risks to children. Robert Fairburn. The Herald, UK. 27 September 2004.

[Report: Md. schools lax in enforcing pesticide ban](#) Maryland's law was passed to protect students who are sensitive to chemicals used for pest controls and to allow parents to remove students when pesticides are to be applied. [Subscription required]. Associated Press. Herald-Mail, Maryland. 23 September 2004.

[Parents upset over spraying on playgrounds of schools](#) A group of parents who saw an application of Tri-Power Selective Herbicide on the playgrounds of two schools have contacted school and park district officials to encourage, instead, the use of Integrated Pest Management practices. Kenneth L. R. Patchen. Highland Park News, Chicago. 30 September 2004.

[Dioxin at Vietnam levels near pesticide plant](#) Thirty-nine years after a midwife saw "horrific" deformities in babies born near a New Plymouth chemical factory, an official study has found dioxin levels in the blood of local people as high as those in people sprayed with Agent Orange in the Vietnam War. Simon Collins/Kevin Taylor/Martin Johnston/Anne Beston. New Zealand Herald. 10 September 2004.

(d) Mercury

[Bill would ban preservative thimerosal in vaccines](#) A bill that would ban a mercury-based preservative from vaccines for children and pregnant women in California will soon land on Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's desk. [Registration required]. Sandy Kleffman, Contra Costa Times, California. 10 September 2004.

[Thimerosal Exposure in Infants and Developmental Disorders: A Retrospective Cohort Study in the United Kingdom Does Not Support a Causal Association](#) There was no evidence that thimerosal exposure via DTP/DT vaccines causes neurodevelopmental disorders. Nick Andrews, Elizabeth Miller, Andrew Grant, Julia Stowe, Velda Osborne, Brent Taylor. Pediatrics Vol. 114 No. 3. September 2004

[Autistic kids-Vaccines with mercury are not shown to cause autism](#) There's a lot of talk about vaccines that use the preservative thimerosal and how they could relate to autism, but there's no evidence to support a connection, according to a

new review published in the journal Pediatrics. Helen Fields. US News and World Report. 7 September 2004.

[Limits on mercury-added products up to governor](#) Mercury is one of the most potent and persistent environmental toxins. Nationally, 8 to 10 percent of women of childbearing age have mercury levels in their blood, which could put a fetus at risk of developmental injury. Joanna D. Underwood. Asbury Park Press, New Jersey. 9 September 2004

[International Coalition Requests Investigation into Mercury Contamination from Coal-Fired Power Plants](#) A coalition of US and Canadian environmental groups filed a formal complaint today with NAFTA's Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) demanding an investigation into the dramatic increase in mercury contamination of US lakes and rivers. Sierra Legal Media Releases. 16 September 2004.

[EPA Wording Found to Mirror Industry's](#) The EPA spokesman responded that "EPA continues to be most concerned with mercury. We will be regulating mercury emissions from power plants for the first time, and we will concentrate on the need to protect children and pregnant women." [Subscription required]. Juliet Eilperin. Washington Post. 22 September 2004.

[Bush's sorry environmental record](#) Mercury pollution has forced New Hampshire to establish a fish consumption advisory. Infants, children, pregnant women and women of child-bearing age are particularly vulnerable. Mercury affects a child's ability to learn, most notably impairing memory, attention and fine motor function. Russell Train/Rick Russman. Concord Monitor, New Hampshire. 23 September 2004.

[In Rayburn, other lakes requires caution when eating fish](#) The effects of mercury poisoning are serious. An unborn child is at particular risk of irreversible nervous system damage because the brain and other parts of the nervous system are not completely developed. Infants and small children can be similarly affected for the same reason. Editorial. Lufkin Daily News, Texas. 2 September 2004.

[Fish From 172 Rivers, Lakes Have Harmful Mercury Level](#) Mercury is a toxic substance that in high amounts can damage the brain and nervous system. Developing fetuses and young children, however, are more sensitive to mercury's harmful effects. Mike Salinero. Tampa Bay Online. 17 September 2004.

[Fish diet blamed for high mercury levels in 2 B.C. kids](#) B.C. public health officials are investigating the cases of two preschool children whose "grossly elevated" blood mercury levels were found to be up to 20 times higher than acceptable levels. Pamela Fayerman. Vancouver Sun. 30 September 30, 2004

(e) Fire retardants

[Northwest women contaminated with toxic flame retardants](#) Breastmilk study confirms needs for chemical phase-out; says breastfeeding still best for baby and mom. A new study of 40 mothers from Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and Montana found PBDEs (polybrominated diphenyl ethers) in the breastmilk of every woman tested. Press Release. [Northwest Environment Watch](#). 29 September 2004.

[Breast milk awash in chemicals](#) A new study conducted in British Columbia and the U.S. Northwest has found chemical flame retardants in the breast milk of every woman tested. Not only were the chemicals, polybrominated diphenyl ethers or PBDEs, omnipresent, but they were among the highest levels recorded in humans. Andre Picard. [Globe and Mail](#), Toronto. 29 September 2004

[Study shows toxin in breast milk](#) A toxin found in widely used flame retardants has turned up in 100 percent of nursing mothers tested in Washington and other Northwest states. We know from experience in Europe and other places that when (these chemicals) are banned, the levels, particularly in breast milk, decline. Carol Smith. [Seattle Post Intelligencer](#). 29 September 2004.

[Study shows high pollutant level in breast milk](#) When Tammi Keller had her daughter, she chose to breast-feed her because that was the healthiest thing she thought she could do for her baby. She never imagined there could be anything bad in her breast milk. So she was shocked to find out she had high levels of a toxic flame retardant known as PBDEs. Aviva L. Brandt. [Associated Press](#). 28 September 2004.

[Study finds toxin in breast milk of 40 Northwest women tested](#) A study by a Seattle-based environmental group found traces of a toxic flame retardant in the breast milk of 40 women tested in the Northwest. The results follow a series of studies last year that indicated American women have the world's highest levels of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs). Associated Press. [The Seattle Times](#). 29 September 2004.

[PBDEs and the environmental intervention time lag](#) While all people may be taking up PBDEs from house dust, children under 4 are disproportionately at risk because they tend to eat more dust. Children are of concern because of their developmental stages. They can get exposures from mother's milk, from the air, and from dust. Kellyn Betts. [Environmental Science and Technology](#). 15 September 2004.

[Feared chemical in tern eggs - Flame retardant to be illegal by '08](#) New surveys of the widely feared flame retardant known as PBDE show that the eggs of California seabirds have the highest concentrations of the chemical seen in any wildlife. High levels of the same chemical have been detected in the breast milk of nursing mothers in California and other states. [San Francisco Chronicle](#). 10 September 2004.

(3) WATER AND SANITATION

[WHO issues revised drinking water guidelines to help prevent water-related outbreaks and disease](#) Ensuring drinking water is safe is a challenge in every part of the world, from water piped into people's homes, to rural wells and water provided to refugee camps in an emergency. WHO is releasing new recommendations which will help pre-empt drinking water contamination. [WHO](#). 21 September 2004

[Pollution related diseases claim 340 children a day: Bhuiyan](#) Bhuiyan said 340 children die everyday of diseases caused by environment pollution while Tk 500 crore is spent every year for the treatment of water-borne and environmental diseases. Bhuiyan also announced different programmes to observe the Sanitation Month in October. [The Daily Star](#), Bangladesh. 30 September 2004

[International water forum calls for 'Global Perestroika'](#) Access to clean drinking water is a basic human right, declared scientists, diplomats and water-rights activists, at a conference entitled "Water for Life and Security," in Barcelona this summer. 5 million people —2 million of them children — die each year from water-related diseases. Michael Levitin. [Science and Theology News](#). September 2004.

[Green Cross Launches Citizens Campaign for a Global Treaty on the Right to Water](#) It seems obvious to most of us but considering that 1/3 of the world's population risk their lives by simply drinking a glass of water - because they have no access to clean water - it is high time for us all to take action to address this immoral situation and contribute to its resolution. [Green Cross International](#). September 2004.

[UNICEF sending water and sanitation supplies](#) Water and sanitation supplies from UNICEF were slated to arrive in Jamaica last night, in the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan. UNICEF said it was concerned that the lack of access to clean water was placing thousands of children at risk of water and sanitation-related diseases such as diarrhoea and intestinal infections. [Jamaica Observer](#) 17 September 2004.

[UN AIDS Bangladesh in Aftermath of Massive Flooding](#) UNICEF will provide children and pregnant and lactating women in the most vulnerable households with fortified food and supplements to counter anaemia. It will also support a nationwide campaign to provide Vitamin A capsules and de-worming tablets for children. UN/OCHA. 23 September 2004

[Forgotten Bangladesh suffers the rains in silence](#) More than a million children are at risk of illness or death due to acute malnutrition within the next two months without more intervention, according to UN, after double flooding washed away harvest. Lucy Ward. Guardian, London. 29 September 2004

[Doctors Work to Save Haiti Storm Survivors](#) With no electricity or running water and short of basics, doctors are fighting to save survivors of Tropical Storm Jeanne in a city so contaminated it will be hard for newborn babies to survive. Waste from this city's shattered sewage system dirties mud and floodwaters. Most at risk of infection are babies. Paisley Dodds. Associated Press. 28 September 2004.

[Let's restore Haiti's environment](#) Haiti needs to create and enforce environmental laws to protect what trees do remain and plant more trees to slow the effect of water on soil erosion. Its leaders need to think seriously about rebuilding forests, about water management, about evacuation plans when disaster looms. Jean Marceau Lohier. [Registration required]. The Miami Herald. 24 September 2004.

[Peruvians learn to live with nature's wrath](#) The lives of thousands of Peruvians were devastated when unseasonably cold weather battered the southern Andes. Thousands of children caught respiratory diseases. Without warm clothes, food and medicine, dozens died. This was the latest in a series of natural disasters threatening Peru's most vulnerable. Hannah Hennessy. BBC, London. 30 September 2004.

(4) MISCELLANEOUS

[Children's Study -- Environment and Health](#) Environmental hazards can be found all around us -- in the air, within the earth and in the water. Some contaminants are man-made (like pesticides and pollutants), while others are natural substances (like UV radiation and radon). Here are some common environmental problems and their potential health effects. WSOCTV.com, Carolinas. 9 September 2004.

[EPA and National Urban League Join Forces to Protect Children from Environmental Health Risks](#) EPA signed a MOU with

the National Urban League on protecting children in socio-economically disadvantaged communities from environmental health risks. Children of lower-income families are more likely to have asthma attacks and elevated blood lead levels. US/EPA. 29 September 2004.

[Blame It on Your Mom: Roots of Adult Diseases Trace Back to Womb](#) From osteoporosis to cancers and cardiovascular disease, the evidence keeps flooding in: The roots of adult diseases stretch back to childhood, infancy and even the womb. [Subscription required]. Sharon Begley. Wall Street Journal. 17 September 2004.

[Scientists call for standards on environmental contamination](#) Researchers called for new global standards so that risks could be quickly and accurately assessed. With toxic legacies from past mining, farming and industrial practices threatening every country with cancers, birth defects and other health problems, such a standard was vital. World Business Council for Sustainable Development. 16 September 2004.

[Pollution fears threaten a way of life](#) Amid reports of toxic leaks from a radar station, and of pollutants from distant lands carried here by winds and ocean currents, natives worry that there is a link to rising adult cancer rates among their people and sharp increases in early childhood illnesses such as pneumonia and chronic infections. Tom Horton. [Registration Required]. Baltimore Sun. 20 September 2004.
