



Children's Environmental Health

EPA Region 10

www.epa.gov/r10earth/children.htm

Working to Protect Children in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska

Why Focus on Children?

Nearly three million children live in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. Children are especially sensitive to unhealthy environmental conditions. Unlike adults, their bodies are still growing and developing. This puts them at more risk from pollution, toxins and other environmental threats.

Why Should We Be Concerned?

There are currently over 80,000 chemicals on the market in the U.S. and the majority of these chemicals lack information on health effects and toxicity. Many chemicals have known or probable links to cancer, birth defects, reproductive impacts, and other health problems such as learning disabilities. Current research suggests that premature birth, low birth weight, early puberty and childhood obesity may also be associated with exposure to toxins.

Region 10 Children's Environmental Health

- **Asthma** - Over 200,000 children in Region 10 suffer from asthma.
- **Lead** - Exposure continues to threaten learning and development.
- **Pesticides** - Region 10 is a leader in agricultural production; children are exposed to harmful levels of pesticides both in the fields and homes.
- **Radon** - Found in homes throughout the region, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.
- **Environmental Tobacco Smoke** - 20% of children in Alaska have routine exposure to secondhand smoke.
- **Mercury and PCBs** - Contaminants in fish continue to threaten children and women who are pregnant or are of child-bearing age.
- **PBDEs** - Used in everyday items, such as carpeting, electronics, and furniture, these chemicals persist in the environment, build up in humans, and are likely endocrine disruptors.
- **Autism** - Data suggest increasing rates and a potential link to environmental causes.
- **AD/HD** - Although the cause is unknown, many of the behaviors that are observed in children with ADHD have been associated with exposure to high levels of environmental contaminants such as lead and PCBs.
- **Health Disparities** - Vulnerable populations suffer from high rates of certain diseases. Research suggests that health disparities may be produced by both environmental and social factors.

How Can EPA Region 10 Help Protect Children?

Indoor Air Quality: EPA's *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools* program enables schools to address issues such as mold, radon, pest-management and asthma.

Outdoor Air Quality: The Clean School Bus program has helped retrofit thousands of diesel school buses with pollution control devices and has endorsed anti-idling strategies.

School Assessment: HealthySEAT is a free and customizable software tool that helps school districts conduct a facility assessment program. School districts have made substantial low-cost and efficient improvements to their buildings.

Asbestos: EPA's Asbestos in Schools program can help control fiber levels by teaching people to recognize asbestos-containing materials and manage them.

Pest Management: Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a safer, usually less costly option for effective pest management in the school community.

Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign: This program helps schools remove dangerous legacy chemicals and teaches responsible chemical management.

Tribal Nations Children's Environmental Health Summit: Region 10 co-hosted a two-day training for environment and health professionals on preventing and diagnosing environmental exposures.

Other Notable Activities

The National Children's Study

This study will examine the effects of environmental influences on the health and development of more than 100,000 children across the United States, following them from before birth until age 21. The goal of the study is to improve the health and well-being of children.

NW Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit

EPA supports this team of experts to provide practical guidance to doctors and nurses as well as the public on health risks associated with environmental exposures.

For more information on any of these programs, please visit www.epa.gov/r10earth/children.htm

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