



## Environmental Risks to Preconception, Prenatal and Child Health



**best start**  
**meilleur départ**

Ontario's maternal, newborn and early  
child development resource centre

Centre de ressources sur la maternité,  
les nouveau-nés et le développement  
des jeunes enfants de l'Ontario

canadian partnership for  
**children's**  
health & environment



partenariat canadien pour la santé  
**des enfants**  
et l'environnement



## Environmental Risks to Preconception, Prenatal and Child Health



*This bulletin shares information, resources, and links related to environmental risks to child health in Canada. It takes a broad look at environmental risks, rather than focusing on individual risks such as mercury in fish, insecticides or lead in paint. If you are looking for ways to incorporate information about environmental risks into your regular programming, through workshops, displays, handouts, awareness, education, advocacy, policy development etc, this bulletin will link you to key Canadian sources. For information about specific areas of environmental risk, check the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment website at [www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca).*



## Introduction

Environmental contaminants can present serious and long-term risks to reproductive and child health. Information about these risks, and how to address them, is new to many service providers. This topic is enormous and complex. It is also an area of emerging science and considerable uncertainty all of which can generate fear, denial and feelings of helplessness. Despite these challenges, there are many opportunities to address environmental risks to child health for service providers who work in the areas of preconception, prenatal and child health. Service providers can consider a range of simple strategies, for example distributing existing pamphlets to parents, posting links on their website or talking to prenatal clients about mercury in fish. Parents and child care providers can use many basic practices, for example leaving outside shoes at the door, encouraging hand washing and avoiding heating foods in plastic containers. This bulletin will help service providers learn more about what they can do, and will help direct their work to promising strategies related to reducing environmental risks to preconception, prenatal and child health.

## Manuals

### **CHILD HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT – A PRIMER**

Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment, 2005  
[www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)

This book provides an overview of children's unique vulnerabilities, the major health effects of concern, the exposures of greatest concern, what is being done in Canada and in the world and what individuals can do to childproof their homes, schools and communities. French and English.

### **PLAYING IT SAFE: SERVICE PROVIDER STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS TO PRECONCEPTION, PRENATAL AND CHILD HEALTH**

Best Start Resource Centre in collaboration with Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment, 2006  
[www.beststart.org/resources/env\\_action/index.html](http://www.beststart.org/resources/env_action/index.html)

This manual links service providers to promising strategies to address environmental risks to preconception, prenatal and child health. English and French.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO CHILDREN: UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS, ENABLING PREVENTION**

Toronto Public Health, 2005  
[www.toronto.ca/health/hphe/pdf/tr\\_environmental\\_threats\\_all.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/health/hphe/pdf/tr_environmental_threats_all.pdf)

This technical report provides a summary of the literature for service providers, focusing on environmental risks to child health. English only.



## Brochures

### **PLAYING IT SAFE: CHILDPROOFING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment, 2005  
[www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)

This brochure provides "childproofing" tips to protect children from potential harm from toxins and other exposures in our environment. French and English.

### **HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN; WHAT YOU CAN DO!**

Health Canada, 2004  
[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/child-enfant/child\\_safe-enfant\\_sain\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/child-enfant/child_safe-enfant_sain_e.html)

This brochure provides information for parents on how they can create healthy environments for their children. French and English.



## Fact Sheets

### **HIDDEN EXPOSURE FACT SHEETS**

South Riverdale Community Health Centre in collaboration with Toronto Public Health, 2001  
[www.toronto.ca/health/hphe/pdf/hidden\\_exposures.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/health/hphe/pdf/hidden_exposures.pdf)

This series of fact sheets was developed for prenatal educators to share information about environmental risks to reproduction, pregnancy, including pesticides, lead, mercury, paints and solvents, plastics, cleaning products, electro-magnetic fields and asbestos. English, French, Chinese, Spanish, Hindi, Tamil, Urdu.

## Displays

### **PLAYING IT SAFE: ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS TO CHILD HEALTH**

Best Start Resource Centre in collaboration with Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment, 2006  
[www.beststart.org/resources/index.html](http://www.beststart.org/resources/index.html)

This display is available for loan, and measures 6'x3'. It is suitable for use in health fairs and baby fairs and shares brief information about environmental risks to child health. French and English.





## Tools & Kits

### **AUDIT FORM: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CHILDPROOFING CHECKLIST**

Best Start Resource Centre in collaboration with Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment, 2006

[www.beststart.org/resources/env\\_action/index.html](http://www.beststart.org/resources/env_action/index.html)

This form will help service providers plan and complete an audit of environmental risks to child health in early learning settings. English and French .

### **LEARNING KIT: CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

Canadian Child Care Federation, 2005

[www.cccf-fcsge.ca/publications/publications\\_en.html](http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/publications/publications_en.html)

This kit will help service providers plan workshops, presentations, parent discussion groups or staff meetings. The kit includes a research paper, a facilitator's guide and presentation tools related to child health and the environment. French and English.

### **INDOOR AIR QUALITY – TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS ACTION KIT FOR CANADIAN SCHOOLS**

Health Canada, 2003

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/air/tools\\_school-outils\\_ecoles/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/air/tools_school-outils_ecoles/index_e.html)

This tool will help school boards and school staff understand and address indoor air quality problems, including information and activities that can be used to improve the indoor environment of schools, help prevent indoor air quality problems, and resolve problems if they do arise. French and English.



## Websites

### CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

[www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)

A key source for Canadian information in French and English, information about child health and the environment, including a searchable directory of resources and information, Q&As, events, news, and emerging issues.



### TORONTO PUBLIC HEALTH

[www.toronto.ca/health/hphe/children.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/health/hphe/children.htm)

A range of reports, resources and links related to child health and the environment.

### HEALTHY SPACES

[www.cfc-efc.ca/healthy-spaces/](http://www.cfc-efc.ca/healthy-spaces/)

The Canadian Institute of Child Health, in partnership with the Canadian Child Care Federation, has created this website to increase awareness of children's exposure to potential contaminants in the areas where children grow, learn and play. French and English.

### HEALTHYSCHOOLS.COM

[www.healthyschools.com](http://www.healthyschools.com)

HealthySchools.com is a tool developed by Pollution Probe to help Ontario school boards identify, prevent, and improve indoor environment problems that could otherwise affect children's health and learning adversely.

### CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

[www.cape.ca/children.html](http://www.cape.ca/children.html)

This website is intended to introduce clinicians to children's environmental health issues. Information on the health effects from environmental exposures is presented.



#### **ONTARIO PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION**

[www.opha.on.ca/resources/e-h.html#environmental](http://www.opha.on.ca/resources/e-h.html#environmental)

Position papers, press releases, fact sheets, briefing notes, presentations etc.

#### **LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF CANADA**

[www.ldac-taac.ca/Environment/environment-e.asp](http://www.ldac-taac.ca/Environment/environment-e.asp)

Position papers and articles about environmental risks and learning disabilities. French and English

#### **ENVIRONMENT CANADA'S NATIONAL POLLUTANT RELEASE INVENTORY**

[www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/npri](http://www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/npri)

This site provides a range of pollutant release information including information about the releases from specific Canadian industries. French and English

#### **MOTHERISK**

[www.motherisk.org/prof/occ\\_env\\_exposures.jsp](http://www.motherisk.org/prof/occ_env_exposures.jsp)

Information about environmental and occupational exposures in pregnancy.

#### **LESS TOXIC GUIDE**

[www.lesstoxicguide.ca](http://www.lesstoxicguide.ca)

Information about the health risks in common household products, and about safer alternatives, developed by the Nova Scotia Allergy and Environmental Health Association.

#### **CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION**

[www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)

A range of information, including fact sheets on making your house healthier, including mould and indoor air quality. French and English

## **Upcoming Events**

To share information about your upcoming training session, or to find out about upcoming conferences or workshops on child health and environment across Canada, go to:

[www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/english/events](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/english/events)

[www.beststart.org/events/upcoming.html](http://www.beststart.org/events/upcoming.html)



PARTNERS:

Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment  
Canadian Child Care Federation  
Canadian Environmental Law Association  
Canadian Institute for Child Health  
Environmental Health Clinic – Women's College Hospital  
Toronto Public Health  
Learning Disabilities Association of Canada  
Ontario College of Family Physicians  
Ontario Public Health Association  
Pollution Probe  
South Riverdale Community Health Centre



Ontario  
Prevention  
Clearinghouse

Centre ontarien  
d'information  
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*Best Start is a key program of the Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse.*

**Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and  
Early Child Development Resource Centre**

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