



## Bulletin of the Canadian Network for Human Health and the Environment

*Number 14*

*October 2009*

**Welcome to the fourteenth Bulletin of the Canadian Network for Human Health and the Environment!**

**Visit us at:** [www.cnhhe-rcshe.ca](http://www.cnhhe-rcshe.ca)

If you have new information that would be useful to others on any aspect of human health and the environment, please forward it to us for inclusion in the next Bulletin: [barb.mackinnon@nb.lung.ca](mailto:barb.mackinnon@nb.lung.ca). The deadline for the next Bulletin is **November 13, 2009**.

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### NETWORK DISCUSSION

You may notice that we will be soliciting feedback from our network members in this and future bulletins. Your responses will assist us in continuing to provide quality information and services you've come to know. Please reply to this email with short responses for the following questions:

- Do you have any environmental information on your website?
- Do you have any environmental health programs?
- What are the main topic areas that you focus on with respect to environmental health?
- What environmental health strengths do you have that you think other NGOs would like to be aware of?
- What would you like help with from other health NGOs?

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### FIRESIDE CHATS

Fireside Chats are FREE pan-Canadian discussions on pressing community health issues for professionals from community health and issue-related sectors. Participants join in via a toll-free Teleconference and access a visual presentation via Internet. No registration fees, travel costs or green house gas emissions.

**For More info and to register:** [www.chnet-works.ca](http://www.chnet-works.ca)

#### **CHATS:**

##### **Climate Change and Water Quality**

Date & Time: Friday, 13 November 2009, 01:00 PM — 02:30 PM (Eastern Time)

Advisor on Tap:

Margaret Sanborn, Assistant Clinical Professor McMaster University, Department of Family

Medicine

Member, The International Joint Commission, Health Professionals Task Force

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**Towards Evidence Informed Practice - Ontario Public Health Association**

Date & Time: Friday, 20 November 2009, 01:00 PM — 02:30 PM (Eastern Time)

Advisor on Tap:

Dayna Albert MA BSc.

Manager, Towards Evidence-Informed Practice, OPHA

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**Public Health Human Resources: There Aren't Enough So Why Isn't Anyone Paying Attention?**

Date & Time: Tuesday, 24 November 2009, 01:00 PM — 02:30 PM (Eastern Time)

Advisor on Tap

Ivy Bourgeault, PhD, RRASpHIRN, University of Ottawa

Population Health Improvement Network -

RÉSEAU DE RECHERCHES D'AMÉLIORATION DE LA SANTÉ DE LA POPULATION

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**Healthy Communities and Climate Change**

Date & Time: Thursday, 26 November 2009, 01:00 PM — 02:30 PM (Eastern Time)

Advisors on Tap:

Kerri Klein, Provincial Facilitator, BC Healthy Communities

Alice Miro, Communications Coordinator, Smart Growth BC

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**Environment, Health and the Role of Nurses**

Date & Time: Tuesday, 08 December 2009, 01:00 PM — 02:30 PM (Eastern Time)

Advisor on Tap:

Fiona Hanley, Canadian Nurses Association - Luminary Project

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\*\*\*Other fireside chats posted as they are finalized.

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**How to register for Fireside Chats**

step 1: go to: [www.chnet-works.ca](http://www.chnet-works.ca)

Step 2: create a login account if you don't have one (left column)

Step 3: login and then register for the Fireside Chats of your choice

Step 4: Fireside chat Registrants receive Fireside Chat access instructions via email (for telephone/internet)

Need assistance? Having any difficulty logging on or registering?

Contact: [animateur@chnet-works.ca](mailto:animateur@chnet-works.ca)

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**GENERAL**

**Chemical Substances in Batch 11 of the Challenge**

On September 26, 2009, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Health released a Notice in the *Canada Gazette* for the eleventh group of substances identified under the Challenge. Industry and interested stakeholders are invited to submit any information that may be used to inform risk assessment and to develop and benchmark best practices for risk management and

product stewardship. For more information, please visit:

[http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/challenge-defi/batch-lot\\_11\\_e.html](http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/challenge-defi/batch-lot_11_e.html).

### **Publication of the Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) Concentration Limits for Architectural Coatings Regulations**

*Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) Concentration Limits for Architectural Coatings Regulations* were published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part II, on September 30, 2009. The purpose of the Regulations is to protect the environment and health of Canadians by introducing volatile organic compound concentration limits for 53 categories of paints, stains, varnishes, primers and other architectural coatings. Background information on the Regulations is available on Environment Canada's *VOCs in Consumer and Commercial Products* website at the following address:

[www.ec.gc.ca/nopp/voc/](http://www.ec.gc.ca/nopp/voc/).

### **Compendium of Sustainable Development Indicator Initiatives Available**

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) released a Compendium of Sustainable Development Indicator Initiatives. It provides information on initiatives carried out at international, national, provincial/territorial/state, regional, sectoral, ecosystem and local/community levels worldwide. To search or add to the compendium, please visit:

<http://www.iisd.org/measure/compendium>.

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## **HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT NEWS**

### **EPA Lists Areas Violating Daily Air Pollution Requirements**

EPA is designating 31 areas across the country as not meeting the agency's daily standards for fine particle air pollution (PM 2.5), or particulate matter. These areas, made up of 120 full or partial counties, were designated as "nonattainment" because their 2006 to 2008 air quality monitoring data showed that they did not meet the agency's health-based standards. To view the full article, please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/pmdesignations/2006standards/index.htm>.

### **Is Swimming Pool Chlorine Fueling The Allergy Epidemic**

Swimming in a chlorinated pool may boost the odds that a child susceptible to asthma and allergies will develop these problems, a study released today indicates. Among "sensitive" adolescents, the odds for hay fever were between 3.3- and 6.6-fold higher in those who swam in chlorinated pools for greater than 100 hours and the odds of allergic rhinitis were increased 2.2- to 3.5-fold among those who logged more than 1000 hours of chlorinated pool time. To view the full article, please visit: <http://planetark.org/wen/54654>.

### **Early Exposure to Common Chemicals May be Programming Kids to be Fat**

In 2006 scientists at the Harvard School of Public Health reported that the prevalence of obesity in infants under 6 months had risen 73 percent since 1980. Evidence has been steadily accumulating that certain hormone-mimicking pollutants, ubiquitous in the food chain, have two previously unsuspected effects. They act on genes in the developing fetus and newborn to turn more precursor cells into fat cells, which stay with you for life. And they may alter metabolic rate, so that the body hoards calories rather than burning them, like a physiological Scrooge. To view the full article, please visit: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/215179/page/1>.

### **Lead, Arsenic Found in Products from Handbags to Car Seats**

The Michigan-based Ecology Center tested more than 5,000 products for its new database, [healthystuff.org](http://healthystuff.org), launched Wednesday. The group found lead in 75% of the 100 women's handbags tested. Two-thirds of all handbags tested had lead levels above 300 parts per million, the new safety standard for children's products. To read the full article, please visit: [http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2009-09-16-chemicals-products\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2009-09-16-chemicals-products_N.htm).

### **Fight Grows Over Labels on Household Cleaners**

Come January, the industry has said it will voluntarily start to disclose much of what is in its cleaning products, which now represent a \$14 billion-a-year business. Consumers will be able to call an 800 number, look at a Web site or, in some cases, simply check the product label to find the ingredients. To view the full article, please visit:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/17/business/energy-environment/17green.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/17/business/energy-environment/17green.html?_r=1).

### **Chemical Pollutants Linked to Fewer Female Births**

High exposure to certain now-banned industrial chemicals may lead to fewer female births, a new study suggests. The findings, reported in the journal Environmental Health, add to evidence that the two groups of related chemicals -- polybrominated biphenyls (PBBs) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) -- may affect human reproduction. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory?id=8592170>.

### **WHO Slashes Radon Limit in Homes, Cites Lung Cancer**

The WHO's new recommended maximum level of radon gas is 100 becquerels per cubic metre -- one tenth of its previously recommended maximum of 1,000 becquerels, issued in 1996. If a country cannot meet the new standard, levels should not exceed 300 becquerels per cubic metre, it said, noting that the risk of lung cancer rises 16 percent per 100 becquerels. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.reutershealth.com/archive/2009/09/22/eline/links/20090922elin012.html>.

### **Natural Disasters Displacing Millions - U.N. Study**

Floods, storms, drought and other climate-related natural disasters drove 20 million people from their homes last year, nearly four times as many as were displaced by conflicts, a new U.N. report says. The study tried to quantify for the first time the number of people forced to flee their homes because of climate change. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://in.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idINIndia-42632820090922>.

### **EPA Considers Regulation of Pharmaceuticals in Drinking Water**

Pharmaceuticals including a number of estrogens, pesticides, and two major perfluorinated compounds are among the 104 chemicals EPA listed today for possible regulation in drinking water. To read the full article, please visit: <http://pubs.acs.org/cen/news/87/i39/8739news5.html>.

### **Chemicals in Breast Milk Linked to Testicular Cancer**

A study in Denmark suggests hormone-disrupting chemicals such as pesticides may explain why so many men in the country develop the disease. Danish men are up to four times more likely to have testicular cancer as men than in neighbouring Finland. Denmark also suffers high rates of other male reproductive disorders, including poor semen quality and genital abnormalities. Many experts believe man-made pollutants that alter the effect of hormones in the developing foetus may be to blame. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1215877/Chemicals-breast-milk-linked-testicular->

[cancer.html#ixzz0TRtD3NWE](#).

### **Air Pollution May Raise Pre-Term Birth Risk**

Researchers looked at the relationship between air pollution levels and the risk of pre-term delivery among more than 476,000 women who gave birth in the Atlanta metropolitan area between 1994 and 2004. The researchers tracked daily pollution levels using data from various air-quality monitors in five counties. They found that while there were no clear connections between pre-term birth and most of the air pollutants they studied, three particular air pollutants were related to a higher risk. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://in.reuters.com/article/healthNewsMolt/idINTRE58N4K420090924?sp=true>.

### **New Analysis Brings Dire Forecast Of 6.3-Degree Temperature Increase**

The new overview of global warming research, aimed at marshaling political support for a new international climate pact by the end of the year, highlights the extent to which recent scientific assessments have outstripped the predictions issued by the Nobel Prize-winning U.N.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2007. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/24/AR2009092402602.html>.

### **Wild Game Source of Lead for Those Who Eat the Hunted Meat**

People who eat wild game shot by hunters have significantly higher levels of lead circulating in their blood than those who do not, report researchers from the CDC. The results agree with a handful of other studies that have found the lead from the bullets used to kill game such as deer and elk can leach into the meat and then into the people who eat it. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/lead-from-bullets-ends-up-in-wild-game-and-people>.

### **By 2050, 25m More Children Will Go Hungry as Climate Change Leads to Food Crisis**

If global warming goes unchecked, all regions of the world will be affected, but the most vulnerable – south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa – will be hit hardest by failing crop yields, according to the report, prepared by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) for the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. The grim scenario is the first to gauge the effects of climate change on the world's food supply by combining climate and agricultural models. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/sep/30/food-crisis-malnutrition-climate-change>.

### **Children's Diseases Linked to Chemicals on Rise, Professor Says**

Chronic childhood diseases linked to exposure to toxic chemicals in the environment have been surging upward, costing the U.S. almost \$55 billion a year. Philip J. Landrigan, professor and chairman of preventive medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, outlined the challenges facing those working to combat the rise of birth defects, asthma, neuro-developmental disorders and other major diseases of children in the United States and other industrial nations. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.jsonline.com/features/health/63009612.html>.

### **Gov't, Industry Underestimate Oilsands Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Report**

Greenhouse gas emissions from the oilsands are being underestimated by at least a quarter by government and industry, a new report claims. The document by Global Forest Watch, says official estimates don't account for carbon released as forest cover is cut and peatlands disturbed.

"It adds up to a significant amount of greenhouse gases that will be emitted, particularly because of peatland destruction," said Peter Lee, one of the authors of the report. To view the full article, please visit: <http://www.metronews.ca/toronto/live/article/328126--gov-t-industry-underestimate-oilsands-greenhouse-gas-emissions-report>.

### **Air Pollution Could Trigger Appendicitis: Study**

The study of more than 5,000 adults living in Calgary who had been hospitalized with appendicitis between April 1999 and December 2006 found more than half of the admissions — 52 per cent — occurred between April and September, the warmest months of the year, when people spend more time outdoors and leave windows open. Days with higher concentrations of ozone and nitrogen dioxide were "significantly associated" with appendicitis, the team reports in a study published this week in the Canadian Medical Association Journal. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.canada.com/health/pollution%20could%20trigger%20appendicitis%20Study/2068045/story.html>.

### **Healthy Foods Carry Hidden Dangers, New Study Finds**

Leafy greens, tomatoes and berries: They're packed with vitamins and showcased by nutritionists as healthful foods that Americans should eat regularly. They are also among the 10 foods most likely to make you sick, according to a nonprofit research group's analysis. Researchers analyzed federal data collected since 1990 to identify the foods regulated by the Food and Drug Administration that caused the largest numbers of foodborne-illness outbreaks. The 10 riskiest foods were, in descending order: leafy greens, eggs, tuna, oysters, potatoes, cheese, ice cream, tomatoes, sprouts and berries. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/05/AR2009100503385.html>.

### **Polluted Plumes from Distant Countries Can Cause Health Problems, Study Warns**

Pollution from developing countries, like China and India, could become even more influential in industrialized countries that are reducing their emissions through tighter environmental standards, according to the National Research Council. While it can be difficult to distinguish between domestic and foreign air pollution, some plumes can definitely be traced to Asia -- based on meteorological and chemical analysis. To read the full article, please visit:

[http://www.oregonlive.com/environment/index.ssf/2009/09/polluted\\_plumes\\_from\\_distant\\_c.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/environment/index.ssf/2009/09/polluted_plumes_from_distant_c.html).

### **Oozing with Controversy**

Whatever you call it, Quebec's municipalities produce a lot of it: 914,726 tonnes of sludge was scraped out of 700 water treatment plants in Quebec in 2007. About 42 per cent of the sludge was incinerated and 31 per cent was sent to dumps. But the remaining 27 per cent was "recycled" as fertilizer, mostly on farmland. While less than three per cent of cultivated land in Quebec receives municipalities' sludge, there is no way for consumers to know if the food they eat has been grown in soil where the sludge was spread. To view the full article, please visit:

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/technology/Oozing%20with%20controversy/2079944/story.html>.

### **Arsenic in Rice: a Recipe for Nutrient Loss**

Uptake of arsenic by rice plants could be stifling crucial micronutrients such as selenium in rice grains, according to new research published in *ES&T*. The findings are bad news for people in

Asia, whose diet is primarily rice, because selenium helps cleanse toxic arsenic from the body. To read the full article, please visit: <http://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/es902922b>.

### **Despite State of Emergency, Attawapiskat 'Abandoned' by Ottawa as Winter Nears**

Disconcerted members of the isolated Attawapiskat First Nation are nervously eyeing the approaching northern Ontario winter following a summer of living conditions that included a failed sewage system, overcrowding, and toxic contamination. They say they've been essentially left to fend for themselves in trying to deal with deplorable living conditions and the costs of an evacuation prompted by a sewer backup into eight homes in July. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/canadianpress/article/ALeqM5i1qESy1BO5AY6OA80FmnEV7RovmA>.

### **Concerned About BPA? Check Your Receipts**

While working at Polaroid Corp. for more than a decade, John C. Warner learned about the chemistry behind some carbonless copy papers (now used for most credit card receipts) and the thermal imaging papers that are spit out by most modern cash registers. Both relied on bisphenol-A. Manufacturers would coat a powdery layer of this BPA onto one side of a piece of paper together with an invisible ink, he says. "Later, when you applied pressure or heat, they would merge together and you'd get color." To view the full article, please visit: [http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/48084/title/Science %2B the Public Concerned about BPA Check your receipts](http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/48084/title/Science_%2B_the_Public_Concerned_about_BPA_Check_your_receipts).

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