



Bulletin of the Canadian Network for Human Health and the Environment

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

Visit us at: 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. The deadline for the next Bulletin is **January 15, 2010**.

GENERAL

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada Comments on Fluoride in Drinking Water

There are important health concerns about the use of fluoride in drinking water that were not addressed in the technical document. LDAC's concern is for the effects of fluoride on the developing brain, especially as these affect fetuses, infants and children. To read the full comments, please visit:

http://www.nb.lung.ca/pdf/LDAC_revised_comments_CDW_fluoride_09.pdf.

Joint Statement Marshals Forces to Greening Health Care

Twelve national organizations representing all areas of the health sector, joined by the David Suzuki Foundation, have produced a joint statement spelling out a new commitment to creating an environmentally responsible health sector. It is being released just prior to the Copenhagen Climate Summit in December to help raise environmental awareness and action. To read the full release, please visit:

http://www.cha.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=241:joint-statement-marshals-forces-to-greening-health-care&catid=60:pressreleasesadvisories&Itemid=56.

Chemical Substances in Batch 6 of the Challenge

Notices with respect to Batch 6 of the CMP Challenge were published in the *Canada Gazette* Part I, Vol. 143 No. 48 on Saturday, November 28, 2009. The final screening assessment reports and risk management approach documents for these substances were released as well. The public has until January 27, 2010 to submit written comments on the risk management approach documents to the Minister of the Environment and to the Minister of Health. Following that 60-day public comment period, the comments will be considered, and the approach documents revised as necessary. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/challenge-defi/batch-lot-6/index-eng.php>.

Chemicals Management Plan Fact Sheets Now Available

5 CMP Fact sheets were recently posted the Chemical Substances Website. They are accessible at: <http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/fact-fait/index-eng.php>. The topics are:

Chemicals and Children's Health

Chemicals and Our Environment

Chemicals and Your Health

Chemicals Management Plan Overview

Monitoring and Research under the Chemicals Management Plan

You may also be interested in reading Canada's thematic profile on Chemicals posted on the UN Commission on Sustainable Development website:

http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_ni/ni_natiinfo_canada.shtml or

http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_ni/ni_pdfs/NationalReports/canada/Chemicals.pdf.

Health Canada Chemical Contaminants Updates

Health Canada to host 2010 World Health Organization scientific experts

meeting on Bisphenol A http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/nr-cp/_2009/2009_198-eng.php

Backgrounder: Actions to Date on Bisphenol A http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/nr-cp/_2009/2009_198bk1-eng.php

Health Canada is Working With the Food Industry to Develop a Code of Practice to Minimize the Occurrence of Bisphenol A in Infant Formula <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/packag-embal/bpa/bpa-adv-indus-cons-indus-eng.php>

FAO/WHO Expert Meeting To Review Toxicological and Health Aspects of Bisphenol A (BPA) http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/packag-embal/bpa/bpa_ann-eng.php

Health Canada Food Additives Updates

The Bureau of Chemical Safety would like to advise you of the following update(s) to the "Food Additives" section of Health Canada website: Technical Consultation on Health Canada's Proposal to Amend the Food and Drug Regulations to Permit the Use of the Enzyme Asparaginase in Certain Food Products [December 2009].

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/consultation/init/_dec2009-asparaginase/index-eng.php

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT NEWS

Royal College of Physicians Calls for Action on Climate Change

The Royal College of Physicians has joined with doctors from across the globe to call for action to address the health effects of climate change. This has included joining the International Climate and Health Council, which was officially launched on November 25; see:

<http://press.psprings.co.uk/bmj/november/communique.doc>.

This launch coincided with a series of papers being published by *The Lancet* on the public health impact of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in advance of the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (visit this website for more information at

<http://www.climateandhealth.org>. The founding members of the Council, along with colleagues

from Australia, Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas, are calling for urgent government-led international action to reduce carbon emissions and promote the universal adoption of low carbon sustainable lifestyles. A full list of members of the Council can be found at <http://press.psprings.co.uk/bmj/november/membership.doc>.

PCBs Hike Blood Pressure

After controlling for age, obesity, cholesterol and related blood lipids, gender, race, smoking and sedentary lifestyle — all risk factors for hypertension — PCBs linked strongly with blood pressure. The chance of having unhealthy systolic blood pressure — that maximum pressure, which occurs as the heart muscle contracts — was tripled in the middle PCB-contamination group and almost quadrupled in the highest PCB group. To read the full article, please visit: [http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/49681/title/Science %2B the Public PCBs hike blood pressure](http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/49681/title/Science_%2B_the_Public_PCBs_hike_blood_pressure).

Higher Blood Lead Boosts Depression, Panic Risk

Men and women in their 20s and 30s with the highest levels of lead in their blood were more than twice as likely to suffer from major depression as their peers with the lowest blood lead levels, while their risk of panic disorder was nearly five times greater, researchers found. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.reutershealth.com/archive/2009/12/08/eline/links/20091208elin008.html>.

Soy Doesn't Harm, and May Even Help, Breast Cancer Survivors, Study Finds

Earlier research in animals had raised fears that soy foods might cause a recurrence of the cancer because soy can act like estrogen. A new study of women finds just the opposite. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-sci-soy9-2009dec09,0,6546847.story>.

Radioactive Waste Contaminating Canadian Water Supply: Report

Nuclear facilities and power plants are contaminating local Canadian food and water with radioactive waste that increases risks of cancer and birth defects, says a new report to be released on Friday. The report, Tritium on Tap, produced by the Sierra Club of Canada, warned that radioactive emissions from various nuclear plants across the country have more than doubled over the past decade. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.edmontonjournal.com/health/Nuclear%20plants%20leaking%20waste%20Report/2245386/story.html>.

Inhaling Human Pathogens With Cigarette Smoke

Cigarettes contain hundreds of different strains of bacteria, including many human pathogens that may play a role in lung diseases and respiratory infections, new research shows. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/inhaling-human-pathogens-with-cigarette-smoke>.

Feds Failing in Duty to Protect Water from Oilsands Development: Report

The Harper government is failing to enforce federal law and exercise its constitutional authority in at least 10 different aspects of monitoring the exploitation of Alberta's oilsands and its impact on water, says a new report to be released Monday. The study, prepared by seven environmental organizations, highlights key testimony from recent federal hearings that revealed a failure to crack down on major water diversions, regulate toxic pollution and leakage as well as the

absence of legislation to reduce acid rain and regulations to address climate change. To read the full report, please visit:

<http://www.canada.com/health/Feds%20failing%20duty%20protect%20water%20from%20oilsands%20development%20Report/2255805/story.html>.

Oilsands Pollution Exceeds Official Estimates: Study

An independent study suggests pollution from Alberta's oilsands is nearly five times greater and twice as widespread as industry figures say. The study says toxic emissions from the controversial industry are equal to a major oil spill occurring every year. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/735399--oilsands-pollution-exceeds-official-estimates-study>.

Gas Inhalation Causes Road-Rage Rats

Breathing in fumes from petrol made lab rats more aggressive, a finding that has wide implications for urban pollution, according to a study published on Tuesday. Dissection of the rats showed that those exposed to petrol (US gasoline), had big fluctuations in a key group of neurotransmitters -- chemicals used for exchanging messages between neurons -- in three areas of the brain. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ixYMp6u2Fy3mZki65eTmDRiAKklw>.

Pillows, Vehicle Seats Key Sources of Flame Retardants

Researchers have tracked the most significant sources of human exposure to one type of flame retardant chemicals – polybrominated dipheylethers (PBDEs) – by using a new kind of portable x-ray analyzer that can detect bromine levels in household items. Topping the list were sleeping pillows and vehicle seat cushions whose bromine levels were significantly associated with PBDE levels measured in the participants' blood. Bromine levels ranged dramatically from product to product and house to house, even among similar pieces of furniture or electronics. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/pillows-vehicles-major-sources-of-flame-retardants>.

Study Links ADHD to Smoking, Lead

Exposure to both tobacco smoke before birth and lead during childhood increases a child's risk of developing attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) more than eight-fold, according to new research from Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://news.cincinnati.com/article/AB/20091122/NEWS01/911230317/Study%20links%20ADHD%20to%20smoking%20%20lead>.

Report Details 'Coal's Assault on Human Health'

Coal pollution is assaulting human health through impacts on workers, residents near mining operations and power plants, and the environment in coalfield communities, according to [a new report](#) by a group of physicians. The report by Physicians for Social Responsibility examined coal's impacts on major organ systems of the human body, from the lungs to the brain. To read the full article, please visit: <http://wvgazette.com/News/200911180721>. To view the report, please visit: <http://www.psr.org/resources/coal-assault-on-human-health.html>.

Atrazine Sparks Stress Hormones in Female Rats

A new study reveals that female rats fed atrazine at the time of ovulation released a flow of hormones that are associated with stress and that are known to interfere with hormones essential for reproduction. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/atrazine-activates-stress-in-female-rats>.

Canada's About-Face on Climate

Before Harper's Conservative Party won a minority government in 2006, Canada had been at the forefront of multi-national negotiations toward a renewal of the Kyoto Protocol beginning after 2012. Then, the new prime minister slashed the environment budget by 10 percent, erased the government's climate change website (later replaced by a stripped down version) and announced that Canada would not be able to fulfill its Kyoto Protocol commitments. Harper's government then presented legislation - called "[Turning the Corner](#)" - that would greatly reduced the country's emission-reduction obligations. To read the full article, please visit:

http://www.publicintegrity.org/investigations/global_climate_change_lobby/articles/entry/1853.

Obesity Gene Discovery 'May Cut Cases Blamed on Abuse'

By comparing the DNA profile of obese children with others of a normal weight they found certain parts of the genome were missing in the obese group.

In particular they zeroed in on a missing part of chromosome 16 which seemed to have a strong link to severe obesity. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/8394991.stm>.

WHO Identifies Global Priorities for Climate Change and Health Research

The World Health Organization (WHO) has released a report titled "Protecting health from climate change: global research priorities," which presents the conclusions from a global consultation seeking to improve the evidence base for policies to protect health from climate change. To read the full report, please visit: <http://climate-l.org/2009/12/07/who-identifies-global-priorities-for-climate-change-and-health-research>.