



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

(Le Français suit)

**Number 20**

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**Welcome to the twentieth 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:

[Louise.Steeves@nb.lung.ca](mailto:Louise.Steeves@nb.lung.ca). The deadline for the next Bulletin is **May 7, 2010**.

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### **GENERAL**

#### **Chemicals Management Plan Batch 9**

The public has until May 19, 2010 to submit written comments on the draft screening assessment reports and the risk management scope 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 documents will be revised as necessary. Five of the seventeen substances were proposed as harmful to human health. To read the full report, please visit:

<http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/challenge-defi/batch-lot-9/index-eng.php>.

#### **Consultation on the Proposed Revisions to the Policy on *Listeria Monocytogenes* in Ready-To-Eat Foods**

Health Canada's Bureau of Microbial Hazards is seeking comments on proposed revisions to the 2004 policy on *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat foods. This consultation is open for comment until May 3, 2010. For more information on the consultation, please visit:

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/consultation/init/\\_listeria/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/consultation/init/_listeria/index-eng.php).

#### **North American Environmental Atlas Launches Comprehensive Land Cover Map**

A new map in the *North American Environmental Atlas* depicts North America's environment as a mosaic of forest, prairies, deserts and cities. *Land Cover 2005* provides a harmonized view of North America's surface and offers a foundation for understanding the physical cover on a continental scale and the environmental issues that relate to it. To access the atlas, please visit:

[www.cec.org/naatlas](http://www.cec.org/naatlas).

#### **E-CONSULTATION: Interim Policy Statement on Health Canada's Working Definition for Nanomaterials**

Health Canada is announcing the adoption of the Interim Policy Statement on Health Canada's Working Definition for Nanomaterials and its posting on the Health Canada website. The Interim Policy is effective immediately and comments on this policy statement are being collected so that it may be updated as necessary. For more information, please visit: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/sr-sr/consult/2010/nanomater/draft-ebauche-eng.php>.

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## **HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT NEWS**

### **Depleted and Enriched Uranium Affect DNA in Different Ways**

Meticulous research identifies for the first time how two main types of uranium – enriched and depleted – damage a cell's DNA by different methods. The manner – either by radiation or by its chemical properties as a metal – depends upon whether the uranium is processed or depleted.

This study shows that both types of uranium may carry a health risk because they both affect DNA in ways that can lead to cancer. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/depleted-enriched-uranium-affect-dna-differently>.

### **Phthalates Exposure May Double Breast Cancer Risk ... Or Not**

Researchers conducting a study of phthalate exposure and breast cancer among Mexican women reported that metabolites of one type of phthalate are associated with at least twice the risk of breast cancer, while other types appear to lower risk. This is the first human study to evaluate associations between exposure to phthalates and breast cancer. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/exposure-to-phthalates-higher-breast-cancer-risk>.

### **Farm Pesticides Linked to Deadly Skin Cancer**

Workers who apply certain pesticides to farm fields are twice as likely to contract melanoma, a deadly form of skin cancer, according to a new scientific study. The researchers identified six pesticides that, with repeated exposure, doubled the risk of skin cancer among farmers and other workers who applied them to crops. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/farm-pesticides-linked-to-deadly-skin-cancer>.

### **Study Links Chemical Exposure to Breast Cancer**

Exposure to certain chemicals and pollutants before a woman reaches her mid-30s could treble her risk of developing breast cancer after the menopause, Canadian scientists said on Thursday. In a study in Occupational and Environmental Medicine, a British Medical Journal title, the researchers found that women exposed to synthetic fibers and petrol products during the course of their work appeared to be most at risk. To read the full article, please visit:

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20100401/wl\\_canada\\_nm/canada\\_us\\_cancer\\_breast\\_chemicals](http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20100401/wl_canada_nm/canada_us_cancer_breast_chemicals).

### **Alternative Flame Retardants Leach Into the Environment**

Two chemicals that are becoming widely used replacements for potentially toxic flame retardants in household products such as televisions and furniture have shown up in peregrine falcon eggs in California. The discovery, part of a larger study monitoring contaminants in wildlife, adds to evidence that these new flame retardants escape into and persist in the environment, as the original ones do. To read the full article, please visit:

[http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/57666/title/Alternative\\_flame\\_retardants\\_leach\\_into\\_the\\_environment](http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/57666/title/Alternative_flame_retardants_leach_into_the_environment).

### **Chlorine Surprise for Inland US**

An opportunistic measurement taken just before researchers loaded their kit onto a container heading for the Atlantic has revealed unexpectedly high levels of nitryl chloride in the atmosphere above inland North America. The finding has implications for understanding the atmospheric chemistry behind pollution haze, ozone formation and climate forcing. To read the full article, please visit: <http://environmentalresearchweb.org/cws/article/news/42192>.

### **Study Identifies Hundreds of Obscure - Yet Persistent – Chemicals**

A new study suggests that hundreds of chemicals used commercially could persist and bioaccumulate, yet next to nothing is known about their actions and levels in the environment. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/new-study-identifies-persistent-chemicals>.

### **Household Detergents, Shampoos May Form Harmful Substance in Waste Water**

Scientists are reporting evidence that certain ingredients in shampoo, detergents and other household cleaning agents may be a source of precursor materials for formation of a suspected cancer-causing contaminant in water supplies that receive water from sewage treatment plants. The study sheds new light on possible environmental sources of the contaminant, called NDMA. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/04/100407110819.htm>.

### **Chain Restaurant Menus in U.S. to Reveal Calories**

Chain restaurants in the U.S. will be required to post calorie counts on menus, thanks to a new law tucked into the Obama administration's massive health care bill. The idea behind the new law, which will affect more than 200,000 fast-food joints, is to make sure that customers can read the calorie information as they are ordering. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.cbc.ca/consumer/story/2010/03/23/consumer-calorie-count.html#ixzz0jZeKyXCK>.

### **Cruise Lines Hope to Sink US-Canada Pollution Plan**

Cruise companies are balking at a proposal to create a low-emissions buffer zone around the United States and Canada, saying it sets arbitrary boundaries based on faulty science that overstates the health benefits. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN2119956620100321>

### **Bad Water More Deadly than War**

Bad water kills more people than wars or earthquakes, declares Anders Berntell, executive director of the Stockholm International Water Institute. An estimated 3.6 million people, including 1.5 million children, die each year from water-related diseases. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50710>.

### **U.N. report: Let's Turn Foul Water from Mass Killer into Global Treasure**

Contaminated and polluted water now kills more people than all forms of violence including wars, according to a United Nations report released Monday that calls for turning unsanitary

wastewater into an environmentally safe economic resource. To read the full article, please visit: <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/HEALTH/03/22/united.nations.water.report>.

### **Syncrude Trial Goes Far Beyond Ducks**

The expected two-month trial before Alberta Provincial Court Judge Ken Tjosvold is shaping up to be an environmental show trial – featuring a rare joint prosecution by federal and provincial lawyers. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://www.financialpost.com/news-sectors/story.html?id=2698994>.

### **Bauer Recalls 100,000 Children's Hockey Sticks**

One of Canada's largest sports equipment manufacturers is recalling 100,000 children's hockey sticks around the world after Health Canada warned the company of the sticks' high lead content. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/business/Bauer%20recalls%20children%20hockey%20sticks/2698640/story.html>.

### **Bugs Beware: We're Gunning for Your Genes**

Researchers are working on an entirely new generation of pesticides, one that promises to target individual species while leaving other animals unharmed. The key to the new pesticides is gene silencing, or RNA interference. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20527520.300-bugs-beware-were-gunning-for-your-genes.html>.

### **Baby Fat May Not Be So Cute After All**

New research suggests that interventions aimed at school-aged children may be, if not too little, too late. More and more evidence points to pivotal events very early in life - during the toddler years and even in the womb - that can set young children on an obesity trajectory. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/23/health/23obese.html>.

### **Junk Food: Can People Become Addicted?**

Compulsive eating of rich food triggers some of the same addiction-like responses in the brain as heroin, a study on rats suggests. When U.S. researchers offered rats high-calorie foods, the animals over-consumed calories, quickly gained weight and continued to overeat -- even when they knew they'd receive an unpleasant electric shock. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/pointofview/2010/03/junk-food-can-people-become-addicted.html>.

### **Ottawa to Test for Toxic Dust in Daycares**

Health Canada is looking for scientists to collect and analyze dust at hundreds of daycares to look for the residue of potentially dangerous substances used in everyday items such as plastic toys, cleaning solutions and vinyl flooring. To read the full article, please visit:

<http://www.parentcentral.ca/parent/familyhealth/children'shealth/article/787984--ottawa-to-test-for-toxic-dust-in-daycares>.

### **40 Years On, Reserve Mercury Poisonings Return**

Forty years after mercury poisoning gripped remote northwestern Ontario native reserves and captured international attention, the tragic story is still unfolding. Residents, who weren't even born when the province banned fishing on the Wabigoon-English River system in 1970, are

showing the effects of mercury poisoning, environmentalists say. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/790616--mercury-nightmares-relived>.

### **Amid Nanotech's Dazzling Promise, Health Risks Grow**

Nanotechnology has long been hyped for its potential to cure diseases, ease energy problems, supercharge our computers and more. But increasing evidence shows that the engineered particles could pose a giant risk to the environment and human life. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.aolnews.com/2010/03/24/amid-nanotechs-dazzling-promise-health-risks-grow/19401235>.

### **Plastic Nanoparticles Can Move From Mom to Baby Through Placenta**

Plastic nanoparticles can quickly traverse the human placenta from the mother's side to the developing fetus' side, according to new laboratory research that confirms prior findings from animal studies. The results confirm that smaller sizes of the manufactured materials are able to cross the placenta at a time toward the end of pregnancy when the membrane barrier between mom and fetus is thinner. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/plastic-nanoparticles-can-cross-placenta>.

### **Breastmilk "Teaches" Immune System to Ward Off Allergens in Mice**

A new study in mice shows that exposure to an allergen through breast milk can actively program a pup's immune system to prevent asthma later in life. Exposure to both the allergen and a specific immune factor passed on through the milk by the mother was necessary for protection. To read the full article, please visit: <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/breastmilk-teaches-mice-immune-system-to-ward-off-allergens>.