

COLORADO

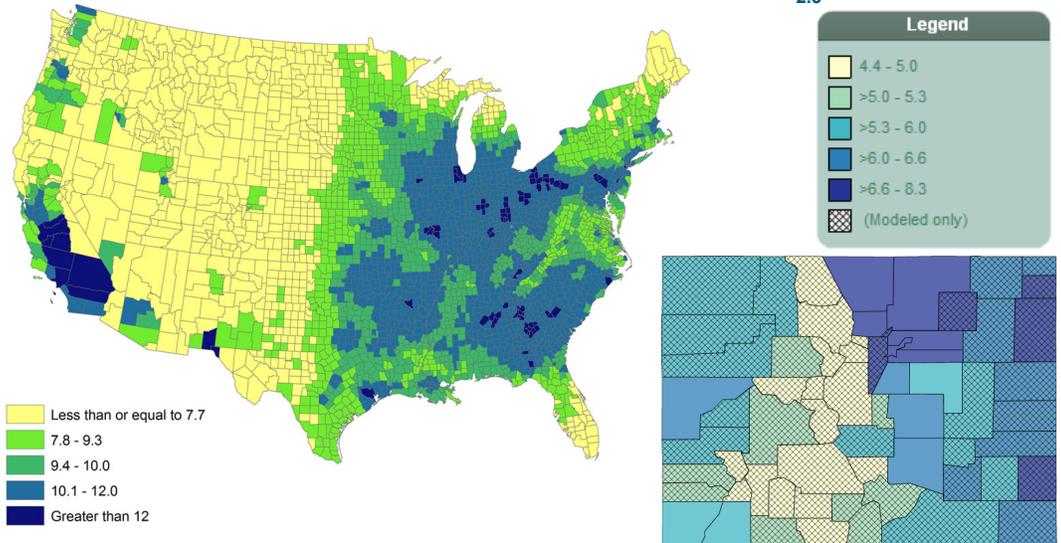
CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

The Environmental Public Health Tracking Network is a dynamic system that provides information and data about environmental hazards and potentially related health problems. It presents what is known about environmental hazards, such as air pollution, and where they might exist, where people are exposed to hazards, and how targeted action can protect health, reduce illness, and save lives.

AIR POLLUTION (PM_{2.5}) AND HEALTH

Air pollution is a leading environmental threat to human health. Particles in the air such as dust, dirt, soot, and smoke are kinds of air pollution that have been linked with health problems. Some particles in the air are large or dark enough to be seen, like some kinds of smoke and soot. Other particles are so small that you cannot see them. Very small particles that are less than 2.5 micrometers wide (smaller than a grain of sand) are known as fine particulate matter or PM_{2.5}.

2011 Annual Average Ambient Concentrations of PM_{2.5} (µg/m³)



PM_{2.5} particles are small enough to be inhaled deeply into the lungs. Once fine particles are in the lungs, they can affect the heart, blood vessels, and lungs. People exposed to fine particles over a long period of time can have more heart and lung problems than people who are not breathing this kind of air pollution. Being exposed to any kind of particulate matter may lead to increased emergency department visits and hospital stays for breathing and heart problems and other health problems. In Colorado:

66 Age-adjusted Rate of Emergency Department Visits for Asthma - 2013
/10,000



29 Age-adjusted Rate of Hospitalizations for Heart Attacks (Over 35) - 2010
/10,000



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Radon Exposure in Colorado

Radon is a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas that forms naturally in soil. Radon is known to cause lung cancer and it can seep into our homes and workplaces through cracks and openings in floors and crawlspaces. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends that people take action to reduce radon exposure when levels measure higher than 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L).

When a person is exposed to radon over many years the exposure can increase the risk of lung cancer. Each year, 250-500 deaths in Colorado are attributed to radon-induced lung cancer. Risk of lung cancer from radon is almost 10 times higher for smokers compared to those who have never smoked. Smoking and radon together create a greater risk of lung cancer than either one alone.

Environmental Hazards



In all of Colorado's counties, the potential for having elevated radon concentrations in your home is high



Each year, **250-500** deaths in Colorado are attributed to radon-induced lung cancer

Health Effects

Socio-Demographic Data

No health burden can be fully understood or effectively addressed without first understanding the socio-demographic characteristics that have contributed to forming a community's overall health, such as race/ethnicity, age, poverty, unemployment, and educational attainment. These characteristics are often referred to as the Social Determinants of Health. We know that the risk of living in an unhealthy community is not the same across all races, income brackets, or levels of education.

The Colorado Environmental Public Health Tracking Program (Colorado Tracking Program) recently examined differences in the low birth weight* (LBW) rate across the state. In 2013, the percentage of LBW births in Colorado was 8.8% of all singleton births. By analyzing these data in conjunction with socio-demographic characteristics and known maternal risk factors**, Tracking identified characteristics of populations with higher rates of known maternal risk factors as well as an increased burden of LBW babies. Using spatial analysis methods, tracking was able to identify Census tracts where problems are occurring around Colorado, which populations face the greatest burden in different locations, and the magnitude of the associations with LBW.

The Colorado Tracking Program's analysis compared the socio-demographic factors of areas with lower than average LBW rates versus areas with higher LBW rates and found:

Social Determinant Statistics



More poverty (**16.7%** compared to **9.6%**) in areas with higher LBW rates



More Hispanics (**34.6%** compared to **20.6%**) in areas with higher LBW rates



Lower educational attainment (**16.4%** compared to **10.8%**) in areas with higher LBW rates

Health Effect Statistics



LBW births accounted for **8.8%** of total births (2013) in Colorado



According to National Center for Health Statistics data, Colorado had the **7th** highest rate of LBW births in 2012

* LBW is defined as weight at birth of less than 5 pounds 8 ounces (<2500 grams)

** Known risk factors in Colorado for LBW include: smoking during pregnancy, receiving adequate prenatal care, preterm births, and age of the mother.