



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

## Children's Health and the Environment

# A Tool Kit



This toolkit provides messages related to the National Tracking Network. We strongly encourage you to use tool kit components as guides, substituting your own local and regional level messaging and data whenever possible.

### Table of Contents

---

2

Goals and Guiding Principles

6

Environmental Public Health Before and After Tracking:  
A Decade of Tracking

7

Environmental Public Health Tracking Network:  
A Timeline

8

Key Messages and Talking Points

10

The Facts

17

Matte Article

18

Social Media Examples



# Goals and Guiding Principles



In today's world, we are exposed to between 3,500 and 5,000 messages a day. From TV ads to news stories, and tweets to Web sites, there's a fierce competition for our attention—and our response. As public health professionals, you have a uniquely valuable message to communicate, that often pertains to keeping people healthy and saving lives.

Whether communicating with citizens, other public health professionals, or policymakers, the following steps can help your organization cut through the clutter and be heard:

1.

### Know your audience

Different audiences require different messages and methods of delivery. Identify your audience, understand what's important to them, and identify what barriers may keep them from action. Then say what you need to say in a way that connects your ideas to that specific audience's needs or wants.



2.

### Say it simply

Use plain language, explain technical terms, and be brief. Regardless of profession or background, we all appreciate straightforward, efficient explanations.



3.

### Say it often

Advertising studies suggest that a person needs to be exposed to a message three to five times to receive the full effect of the message. Choose the mediums, such as social media, websites, interviews and articles, that your audience uses to communicate, and reinforce your messages often.



4.

### Touch the heart

Tell stories that people connect with on an emotional level and underscore that story with data that show the larger perspective. Use personal or local stories to illustrate the big picture.



*next page*



# Goals and Guiding Principles



This tool kit was developed as a resource for your organization, with messages that are intended to resonate with either certain demographics or your audiences overall.

**This toolkit** can be used to help meet the communication goals set by CDC's Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Network).

## Tracking Network Communication Goals

- Educate about the existence of the Tracking Network and how it can be used to show the connections between health and the environment.
- Demonstrate the effect that Tracking Network findings can have on specific environmental public health issues (for example, children's health and exposure to air pollution).
- Encourage partners, stakeholders, and other organizations to access information from and participate in the Tracking Network and help them recognize it as a valuable tool and good investment.

## Audiences

This tool kit was developed as a resource for your organization, with messages that are intended to resonate with either certain demographics or your audiences overall. These audiences include:

- **State and local public and environmental health practitioners:** This group will benefit from general awareness of the Tracking Network and exposure to success stories and specific examples of how data are being used. Encourage them to not only use existing and new Tracking Network services but also advocate use of the program among peer groups.
- **Decision makers:** This group could include city, county, or state health department leadership or elected officials. These are people who might need information for making resource decisions and potential legislative or policy-making opportunities. They are a critical audience for the Tracking Program. Try to provide them with an overall understanding of the functions of the Tracking Network and examples of practical applications of its data. These examples can show how the Tracking Network has proven valuable to cities, states, and regions.
- **Interested public:** This group will likely include persons who look to your organization for health or environment-specific information and discover the Tracking Network via that search. They will benefit most from exposure to specific articles and health-specific information that show the connection between a particular health condition and the environment. Because traditional media channels such as television, radio, and newspapers are important information resources for this group, they will benefit from your organization's active engagement with, and response to, media coverage that relates to health and the environment.



# Goals and Guiding Principles



## How to Use Tool Kit Components

---

**Decade of Tracking** This piece is a straightforward story of the Tracking Network. It uses the simple structure of “Before and After Tracking” to explain the effect the Tracking Network has had.

***Ideas for use:** Use this item as an introductory piece that tells the story of tracking. Include it as a link, borrow from it when developing presentations, and use it when informing colleagues about available resources, interviews, and materials.*

---

**Timeline:** This piece serves as a visual demonstration of how the Tracking Network (and its parent, the Tracking Program) began and has evolved.

***Ideas for use:** Use when creating briefings, as background for presentations, and as a resource for interviews and material development.*

---

**Key Messages and Talking Points:** The key messages and talking points have been written to support you and your spokespersons as you address the critical role the Tracking Network has played in addressing environmental and public health issues. These messages may be used as is or can be customized and incorporated into your own messaging. We encourage you to use local-, regional-, or state-specific data whenever possible; using these data will further underscore the importance of this resource for your constituents.

***Ideas for use include:** Incorporate these messages into talking points for presentations, speeches, media interviews, and copy for materials.*

---

**The Facts:** This fact sheet was developed to provide you with health- and environment-specific information that can be used to coincide with awareness events and more. For example, the Children’s Asthma and the Environment fact sheet contains information that relates specifically to Children’s Health Month as well as general statistics about asthma and air pollution.

***Ideas for use:** Incorporate these facts into your outreach via speeches, emails, Web site content, material development, and social media channels. Provide the fact sheet as a resource to news media. Include interesting data as part of your organization e-mail signature during awareness events. Also, provide the fact sheet to your partners as a resource to distribute.*

*next page*



# Goals and Guiding Principles



**Matte Article:** This article has been developed as a stand-alone piece that highlights the connection between children’s health and the environment. Its messaging reach is designed to be broad and valuable for everyone from general consumers looking for information about a particular disease to health professionals who want to raise awareness among patients.

**Ideas for use:** *Submit this piece to community papers, provide it to organizations to publish in their newsletters, post it on your Web site, include a link to it on your Facebook wall, and share it via tweets. Distribute or make it available electronically to local schools, medical centers, nursing homes, and health care professionals. Provide this piece to decision makers and use local data when possible – it will inform them about the environment-health connection and how that can affect their constituents; they can also use it on their Web sites. You can also include it in newsletters and incorporate into your organization’s mailings.*

**Social Media Examples:** This document contains example topics and sample copy for use on social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter. These posts/tweets were written with the goal of helping your organization engage in a dialogue with your many and varied audiences. Specific examples are provided that can be used to help communicate the value of the Tracking Network to health departments, health practitioners, decision makers and other interested organizations and individual persons.

**Ideas for use:** *Use posts on Facebook and tweets on Twitter. Share with partners who have social media outlets.*

---

## Effective Communication: A Crucial Investment

As grantees and partners of the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, your organization is an important voice that helps communicate the value of the Tracking Network, and ensures that it can grow and evolve to provide even better service into the future. By incorporating this message at every opportunity into your documents, policy briefings, community outreach, social networks, and media outreach, you serve as an influential resource that can provide critical information and translate the value of the Tracking Network to your different audiences. Together, we can educate people about the connection between health and the environment, encourage Tracking Network use, and help potential partners and champions recognize this tool as a crucial investment that saves lives, protects people and saves money through prevention. ■



Environmental Public Health Before and After Tracking:

# A Decade of Tracking



“When the Pew Commission report came out, everyone — the press, the public, Congress — couldn’t believe that a tracking program didn’t already exist.”

Shelly Hearne, Dr. P.H.  
Founding Executive Director,  
Trust for America’s Health (2000)

“CDC’s National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network is the most important accomplishment of the past decade.”

Thomas A. Burke, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
Associate Dean for Public Health  
Practice and Training  
Professor, Department of Health  
Policy and Management  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg  
School of Public Health (2010)



**After a decade of tracking** via a national environmental public health tracking program, our understanding of the connections between public health and the environment is vastly improved. CDC’s Environmental Public Health Tracking Program began 10 years ago with the idea that health and environmental problems are not always separate issues with unrelated solutions.

Though the program began in 2002, the actual online Environmental Public Health Tracking Network launched in 2009. This website is a valuable tool that is helping draw a clear picture of the intricate relationships between environment and health. And, as we move forward, the Tracking Network has the potential to empower more and more organizations to save lives and protect health.

**Before tracking**, even simple questions about health and the environment could take months to answer.

**With a tracking** network in place, public health officials can respond quickly, often within hours, to locate hazard sources or answer citizens’ concerns.

**Before tracking**, collections of data were created and held by many different government departments within their separate department “silos.”

**With tracking**, standards and tools to link these disparate sources of information now exist and can help answer important questions about the public’s health.

**Before tracking**, environmental and health fields were often separated both physically and philosophically.

**With tracking**, these two worlds are brought together to benefit of all.

**Before tracking**, public health and environmental officials concentrated mainly on acute events such as hazardous chemical releases or point-source pollution, such as air pollution from a specific factory.

**With tracking** in place, officials can trace amounts and geographic spread of pollutants over time. This capability allows the officials to monitor long-term trends and place those acute events in context.

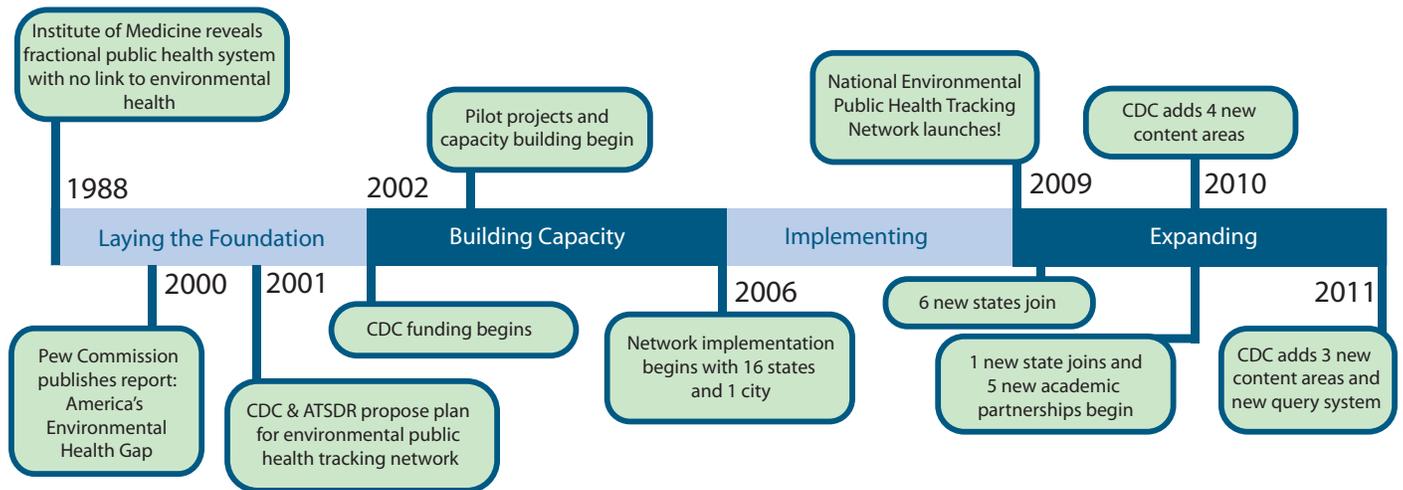
**Before tracking**, environmental health surveillance was more difficult than infectious disease surveillance, a traditional area of concern for CDC and state and local health departments.

**With tracking**, we can apply the same “disease detective” skills to finding environmental causes of illnesses and then take preventive measures to protect the public’s health. ■



Environmental Public Health Tracking Network:

# A Timeline





Children's Health and the Environment:

# Key Messages and Talking Points



The following key messages and talking points can help you and your spokespeople convey and emphasize the effect the Tracking Network can have.

## How to Use

The following key messages and talking points can help you and your spokespeople convey and emphasize the effect the Tracking Network can have on addressing the connections between children's health and the environment. These messages and talking points may be used as they have been written, or, they can be customized for your own purposes. We encourage you to use local-, regional-, or state-specific information whenever possible because it will further underscore the importance of this resource for your constituents. Each of the three key messages presented are supported by three to four additional talking points.

## Key Messages

- **The National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network is a one-of-a-kind tool that brings together information that cannot be found, or is hard to find, anywhere else.**
  - The Tracking Network is the best Internet resource connecting environmental and health information.
  - The Tracking Network is unique because it brings together and standardizes data that would be usually be kept by many different agencies, allowing us to see how our health and the environment are related.
  - The Tracking Network helps make sense of these data with tools such as maps that show where environmental and health problems are happening. This makes that valuable information more useful to people who need it, from scientists to decision-makers.
  - States, cities, universities, and professional organizations can protect people and save lives by using The Tracking Network to help make critical decisions about where to target environmental public health resources.
- **The Tracking Network is helping us understand more about the relationship between children's health and the environment.**
  - Improving our understanding of these connections will help us protect children's health and save lives..
  - The environment affects children differently than adults. Because their bodies are still growing, children are at greater risk if they are exposed to environmental contaminants.
    - Exposure to air pollution has been tied to an increase in hospital visits for asthma in children.

*next page*



Children's Health and the Environment:

# Key Messages and Talking Points



- Children living in older homes with lead-based paint can get sick from breathing lead dust or swallowing chipping paint.
- Drinking water from a private well and even a community water system can also cause health problems if the water is contaminated.
- Tracking can improve surveillance methods by creating indicators that can be linked to environmental exposure or hazard data; something that existing systems are not doing.
- The Tracking Network has data on a variety of children's health issues that can be affected by environmental factors:
  - Asthma
  - Cancer
  - Childhood lead poisoning
  - Developmental disabilities
  - Socioeconomic conditions
- This information can help public health officials plan how and where to best target prevention efforts and protective policies. For example, we can identify where to increase community outreach about the dangers of exposure to air pollution and its effect on asthma.
  - (INSERT ORGANIZATION) was able to put (INSERT ACTION, SAFEGUARD, ETC.) in place to help improve children's health by reducing exposure to (INSERT ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD), which will help (INSERT LOCAL /STATE NUMBERS) of children in (INSERT CITY/STATE).
- **The Tracking Network boosts (INSERT ORGANIZATION) ability to save lives and protect the health of people we serve.**
  - The Tracking Network fills information gaps.
  - The Tracking Network helps us respond quickly to environmental public health issues.
  - Please help others use this important and valuable resource. Everyone who is looking for information about a health and environmental connection should and can use the Tracking Network at [www.cdc.gov/ephtracking](http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking). ■



# The Facts



About one in 10 children had asthma in 2009. The greatest rise in asthma rates was among black children (almost 50 percent increase) from 2001 through 2009.

## The Facts About Children's Health

The environment affects children differently than adults. Because their bodies are still growing, children are at greater risk if they are exposed to environmental contaminants. A toddler playing in dirt contaminated with high levels of lead can become sick from lead poisoning. A child with asthma playing outside when the air quality is bad may have an asthma attack. Environmental hazards are not just outside, but can also be found inside a child's home or school. Children living in older homes with lead-based paint can get sick from breathing lead dust or swallowing chipping paint. Drinking water from a private well and even a community water system is also a concern if it's contaminated. Bacteria and other harmful chemicals can be a threat to anyone's health, but especially to young children.

## About Children's Health and the Environment

- Children are not little adults—their bodies are not the same as adult bodies. Because they are small and still developing, they are more easily exposed to environmental contaminants and here's why<sup>1</sup>:
  - Children breathe more air, drink more water, and eat more food per pound of body weight than adults.
  - Children are more likely to put their hands in their mouth.
  - A child's body may not be able to break down and get rid of harmful contaminants that enter their body.
  - Health problems from an environmental exposure can take years to develop. Because they are young, children have more time to develop health conditions and diseases than adults who are exposed later in their life.
- A mother's health and lifestyle can affect her and her baby's health. Environmental exposures during pregnancy and in early childhood may cause problems in how a child develops. Some health problems can last throughout a child's life. A few conditions or illnesses that may be related to a child's environment are<sup>2</sup>:
  - Accidental injury
  - Allergies
  - Asthma
  - Cancer
  - Endocrine disorders
  - Lead poisoning
  - Pesticide poisoning
  - Neurological and developmental disabilities
  - Obesity

1 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showChildEH-Main.action>

2 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showChildEH-Main.action>



# The Facts



## ASTHMA

### About Asthma

- Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the airways that carry oxygen in and out of the lungs. If a person has asthma, the inside of these airways is irritated and swollen. Asthma can cause shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, and tightness in the chest.
  - Asthma is a major chronic health problem for children. It can get in the way of normal things like playing outdoors, running, and even being around pets.

### Asthma in the United States

- The number of people with asthma continues to grow. In 2007, a CDC study showed that 34 million, or 1 in 9 Americans, had been diagnosed with asthma during their lifetimes. Of that 34 million, 12.3 million had experienced an asthma attack in the previous year.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2009, asthma caused 1.9 million emergency department visits, and almost half a million hospitalizations.<sup>4</sup>
- Asthma was linked to 3,447 deaths (about 9 every day) in 2007.<sup>5</sup>
- About one in 10 children (10 percent) had asthma in 2009. Women were more likely than men and boys more likely than girls to have asthma.<sup>6</sup>
  - The greatest rise in asthma rates was among black children (almost a 50 percent increase) from 2001 through 2009.<sup>7</sup>
- Asthma cost the U.S. about \$3,300 per person with asthma each year from 2002 to 2007 in medical expenses.<sup>8</sup>
  - Asthma costs in the U.S. grew from about \$53 billion in 2002 to about \$56 billion in 2007, about a 6 percent increase.<sup>9</sup>
- More than half (59 percent) of children and one-third (33 percent) of adults who had an asthma attack missed school or work because of asthma in 2008. On average, in 2008 children missed 4 days of school and adults missed 5 days of work because of asthma.<sup>10</sup>

### The Connection Between Asthma and the Environment

- Asthma and outdoor air quality: National air quality has improved since the early 1990s, but many challenges remain in protecting public health and the environment from air quality problems.<sup>11</sup>
  - Since the 1950s, air quality has been a major public health and environmental concern. Local, state, and national programs have helped us learn more about the problems and how to solve them.
  - CDC works closely with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to provide air quality data on the tracking network and to better understand how air pollution affects our health. On this network you will find information and data about the possible health effects of exposure to ozone and particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>).

*next page*

3 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showAsthma.action>

4 [http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/impacts\\_nation/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/impacts_nation/default.htm)

5 <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/Asthma/>

6 <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/Asthma/>

7 <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/Asthma/>

8 <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/Asthma/>

9 <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/Asthma/>

10 <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/Asthma/>

11 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showAirHealth.action>



Children's Health and the Environment:

# The Facts



## What We are Learning from the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

- The Tracking Network includes data on asthma hospital stays and asthma prevalence which is the number of people diagnosed with and living with asthma. These data are useful in providing estimates about the geographic distribution and effects of asthma on children. These estimates can be used to plan and evaluate asthma interventions.
- The hospital admissions data available on the Tracking Network present state hospital discharge data which reflect more severe cases of asthma. Persons who have to stay in the hospital because of asthma usually have more severe attacks than persons with asthma symptoms who are not hospitalized.
- The Tracking Network is using hospital admission dates while other public health programs use the hospital discharge dates to count asthma cases. This may cause a difference in asthma rates between the Tracking Network and other public health Web sites.
- Maine has one of the highest rates of asthma in the country. About 130,000 Mainers—including 28,000 children—have asthma. Put another way, about one in 10 children and adults in Maine have asthma.<sup>12</sup>
  - Maine's Tracking Program linked outdoor ozone data with asthma-related emergency department data. Now scientists can estimate ozone-related asthma cases both in a community and statewide. Further studies show asthma cases associated with ozone levels by age, sex, and geography.
  - The Maine Tracking Program has analyzed the association between asthma and outdoor air quality. The health department has used this information to identify Mainers with asthma at high risk of having an asthma attack. The Maine Tracking Program has shared information to health care professionals. They can now target people with asthma who are at risk and can share prevention tips. ■

<sup>12</sup> [http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/docs/State\\_Tracking\\_2011\\_ME.pdf](http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/docs/State_Tracking_2011_ME.pdf)



# The Facts



## CHILDHOOD CANCER

### About Childhood Cancer

- Childhood cancers remain a leading cause of disease-related deaths among children aged 0 to 14 years in the United States, despite the fact that advances in health care and treatment have dramatically increased survival from these cancers.<sup>13</sup>
- The most common childhood cancers are leukemias, cancers of the blood cells. There are different kinds of childhood leukemia. The most common kinds are acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) and acute myelogenous leukemia (AML). Brain and other nervous system cancers are the second most common types of childhood cancers. Of the 12 major types of childhood cancer, leukemias and brain and other nervous system cancers account for 40 percent of all cases among children less than 20 years of age.<sup>14</sup>

### Childhood Cancer in the United States

- About 12,500 children and adolescents under the age of 20 years are diagnosed with cancer each year. Although about 2,300 children die annually from pediatric cancers, the 5-year relative survival rate for children 0 to 14 years is 80%. Childhood cancers remain a leading cause of disease-related deaths among children aged 0 to 14 years in the United States, despite the fact that advances in health care and treatment have increased survival from these cancers dramatically.<sup>15</sup>

### The Connection Between Childhood Cancer and the Environment

- Childhood cancer is difficult to prevent because very little is known about what causes it. A few conditions such as Down syndrome, other specific chromosomal and genetic abnormalities, and ionizing radiation exposures explain a small percentage of cancer cases in children.<sup>16</sup>
- Childhood cancers are rare. Additionally, it’s difficult to determine what may have led to the development of the childhood cancer. Many factors may play a role in cancer development in children including
  - a mother’s exposure to environmental hazards before or during pregnancy,
  - a child’s exposure to environmental hazards after birth, and
  - genetics.

Also, each distinctive type of childhood cancer develops differently—with a potentially wide variety of causes and a unique clinical course in terms of age, race, gender, and many other factors, which makes determining its cause difficult.

- Childhood cancers, like adult cancers, may be the result of a mix of genetic, environmental, and behavioral causes, not just one factor by itself.<sup>17</sup>

13 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showChildhoodCancer.action>

14 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showChildhoodCancer.action>

15 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showChildhoodCancer.action>

16 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showChildhoodCancer.action>

17 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showChildEHTracking.action>



Children's Health and the Environment:

# The Facts



## What We are Learning from the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

- The Tracking Network provides data on the most common childhood cancers which are acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL), acute myelogenous leukemia (AML), and brain and other nervous system cancers. Through the Tracking Network, childhood cancer incidence data is easier to access and use. These data are collected by state health departments, which are funded by the National Program of Cancer Registries and the Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results Program. Cancer mortality data are published by the National Center for Health Statistics. Providing cancer incidence data on the Tracking Network allows for a better understanding of spatial and temporal patterns of selected cancers that may be related to environmental exposures. ■



# The Facts



## CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING

### About Childhood Lead Poisoning

- Children are more vulnerable to lead poisoning than adults. The first 6 years, particularly the first 3 years, of life is the time when the brain grows the fastest. This is when the critical connections are formed in the brain and nervous system that control thought, learning, hearing, movement, behavior, and emotions. The normal behavior of children at this age—crawling, exploring, teething, putting objects in their mouth—may put them into contact with any lead that is present in their environment.<sup>18</sup>
- The health effects associated with lead are the same whether it enters the body through breathing or swallowing. Lead can affect almost every organ and system in the body. The main target for lead toxicity is the nervous system.<sup>19</sup>
  - Lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and, at very high levels, seizures, coma, and even death.
  - Because lead poisoning often occurs with no obvious symptoms, it frequently goes unrecognized.
- Here are some tips to keep your child safe from lead exposure<sup>20</sup>:
  - Ask a doctor to test your child if you are concerned about him or her being exposed to lead.
  - Talk to your state or local health department about testing paint and dust from your home for lead if you live in a house or apartment built before 1978, especially if young children live with you or visit you.
  - Damp-mop floors, damp-wipe surfaces, and frequently wash your child's hands, pacifiers, and toys to reduce exposure to lead.
  - Use only cold water from the tap for drinking, cooking, and for making baby formula. Hot water is more likely than cold water to contain higher levels of lead, and most of the lead in household water usually comes from plumbing in the house, not from the local water supply.
  - Avoid using home remedies (such as azarcon, greta, and pay-loo-ah) and cosmetics (such as kohl and alkohol) that contain lead.
  - Take basic steps to decrease your exposure to lead if you remodel buildings built before 1978 or if your work or hobbies involve working with lead-based products. For example, shower and change clothes after finishing the task.

### Childhood Lead Poisoning in the United States

- Despite the decrease, lead poisoning still occurs. Over 500,000 U.S. children aged 1- 5 years have blood lead levels greater than 5 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood (µg/dL), the level at which CDC recommends public health interventions. However, no safe level of lead exposure has been identified.<sup>21</sup>
- Today at least 4 million households have children living in them that are being exposed to lead.<sup>22</sup>

18 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showLeadPoisoningEnv.action>

19 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showLeadPoisoningEnv.action>

20 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showChildEHPrevention.action#ChildhoodLeadPoisoning>

21 <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/>

22 <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/>

*next page*



Children's Health and the Environment:

# The Facts



## The Connection Between Childhood Lead Poisoning and the Environment

- Lead occurs naturally in the Earth's crust. It is released in the environment during some activities such as mining, manufacturing, and burning fossil fuels. Lead was once used in paints, gasoline, and some vinyl products, such as mini-blinds. It is still used to make batteries, ammunition, some metal pipes, and devices to shield X-rays.<sup>23</sup>
- The main source of childhood lead poisoning is from lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in older homes. Twenty-four million housing units in the United States have peeling or chipping lead-based paint and high levels of lead-contaminated house dust. Young children live in more than 4 million of these homes.<sup>24</sup>
- People may be exposed to lead by breathing or swallowing lead or lead dust. Once it enters the body, lead can become a health hazard.<sup>25</sup>
- Lead from paints, ceramic products, caulking, and pipe solder has been dramatically reduced in the United States due to health concerns. In 1978, lead-based paints were banned from use in homes. Lead has also been removed from gasoline. However, lead can still be found in the environment. People, especially children, are still being exposed.<sup>26</sup>

## What We are Learning from the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

- The Tracking Network uses state and local childhood lead poisoning prevention programs to obtain state and local data about childhood blood-lead levels. When a child is tested for lead poisoning, state and local childhood lead poisoning prevention programs collect information about the child, including the child's test results and any potential sources of lead in the child's environment. These programs share some of this information with CDC to compile in a national database. CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program provides technical and financial assistance to state and local programs and provides national guidance and policy for the prevention and treatment of childhood lead poisoning.
- The Eureka Valley in Utah was heavily mined from the 1870s to 1965. Several large mine waste rock piles are located on the south side of the town of Eureka, close to homes and businesses. Mining activity and housing construction spread mine waste throughout the town. The mine waste exposed many residents to lead from the Eureka Mills Superfund site.<sup>27</sup>
  - Blood lead data available in the Utah Tracking Network showed highly elevated blood lead levels in children in Eureka. Soil sampling by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Utah Department of Environmental Quality also showed elevated levels of lead in soil in this community. These data resulted in an emergency cleanup of the area. During the cleanup period, the Health Hazard Assessment team (HHA) and the Blood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program conducted free quarterly blood lead testing and provided education to the community. Since cleanup began, fewer children have shown signs of elevated blood lead levels. Now blood lead testing frequency has been reduced from every three months to once a year. ■

23 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showLeadPoisoningEnv.action>

24 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showLeadPoisoningEnv.action>

25 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showLeadPoisoningEnv.action>

26 <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showLeadPoisoningEnv.action>

27 <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking/success/utah.htm#reducing>



Children's Health and the Environment:

# Matte Article



More than four million households have children living in them that are being exposed to lead.

## Children Especially Vulnerable to their Environment

Children are not miniature adults. They do not approach the world as adults do and their bodies do not react to their environment as adults' do. Children breathe more air, drink more water, and eat more food per pound of body weight than adults. Children explore by tasting, smelling, and touching... everything. This curious nature leaves their little bodies more at risk to the contaminants that surround them every day.

There are many reasons for children's increased vulnerability to environmental contaminants. Children can be more frequently exposed to contaminants, but their bodies can't break down toxins at the same rate as an adult. If exposed at a young age, or in the womb, they have more time to develop associated health conditions, including asthma, lead poisoning, and even cancer.

These illnesses affect children at a faster rate despite the fact that simple solutions could reduce risk. More than four million households have children living in them that are being exposed to lead. About one in 10 children has asthma and cancer remains the leading cause of childhood deaths in the U.S.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Network) is a tool that can help us understand the relationships between the environment and children's health issues. It can ultimately help to improve health outcomes. It does this by collecting and sharing data that would traditionally be kept separately by many government and public health agencies. Bringing it all together helps us to discover the connections between our health and the environment.

The Tracking Network is helping us map out what environmental factors contribute to problems such as childhood cancer, asthma, and lead poisoning. This information can help public health officials deliver the right help for issues in these communities in the form of funding, policy changes, and public awareness. The Tracking Network website also provides tips that can be used by individuals to help lower their risk of exposure to contaminants, as well as their children's.

Protect yourself and your family:

- Know when air pollution may be high in your area and reduce exposure. Use the Environmental Protection Agency's Air Quality Index to get accurate information.
- Be aware of your surroundings and limit exposure to solvents, chemicals, lead, and pesticides.
- Ask your doctor to test your child if you are concerned about him or her being exposed to lead.

The hope is that as risk factors are better understood, the scientific and medical communities will not only be better equipped to treat these diseases, but you will be prepared to avoid them.

You can learn more about this important topic at [www.cdc.gov/ephtracking](http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking).





Children's Health and the Environment:

# Social Media Examples



These posts/tweets were written to help your organization “talk” with your many audiences.

## This document contains example topics for social media

**channels** such as Facebook and Twitter. These posts/tweets were written to help your organization “talk” with your many audiences. Specific examples are provided that can be used to help communicate the value of the Tracking Network to health departments, decision makers and other interested parties. Each post/tweet is organized under a goal of the Tracking Network; they can be used as they have been written, or, they can be customized for your own purposes with language and information that will best resonates with your constituents.

### Tips for Using Social Media:

- Social media is a powerful tool that can help you communicate with and engage your audience. If you do not already have social media tools in place, set up a Facebook page and Twitter account here:
  - [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/); <http://twitter.com/>
- CDC’s Tracking Network has an active Facebook page and Twitter account. “Friends” can follow us and share relevant and interesting posts.
  - Facebook: like CDC National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network
  - Twitter: follow @CDC\_EPHTracking
- Watch for general news articles about public health and the environment and share these articles on your Facebook wall and your Twitter account. Use the provided tool kit materials, such as the fact sheet and key messages, to create new posts and tweets that underscore how effective the Tracking Network is and has been.
- Tips for Facebook:
  - When mentioning the Tracking Network, use @CDC National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network.
- Tips for Twitter:
  - Hashtags make your tweets searchable and allow them to become part of the broader conversation on a given topic. When posting information during children’s health month, use #childrenshealth. When mentioning the Tracking Network, use #CDCEPHT.
  - Help build the Tracking Network’s Twitter following by including @CDC\_EPHTracking in your #FF (Follow Friday) tweets. Follow Friday (#FF) is a hashtag used to help Twitter users find other compatible users through their friends’ recommendations.
  - Here’s an example of what a Follow Friday tweet looks like: #FF #Medical #Health @DMC\_Heals @HenryFordNews @ClevelandClinic @KHNews @kevinmd @DoctorsLounge @GoHealthDotCom @DrDavidHanscom @meyouhealth

*next page*



# Social Media Examples



## Children’s Health

**Goal: Educate about the connection between children’s health and the environment**

Facebook	Twitter
<p>Children who are exposed to health risks in the environment have more time to develop health conditions and diseases than adults who are exposed later in their life. Learn more about health risks associated with the environment at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	<p>See how @CDC_EPHTracking Network reports connections between #childrenshealth and the #enviro <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a></p>
<p>Environmental exposures during pregnancy and early childhood may cause problems in how a child develops. Use CDC’s Tracking Network to learn more about environmental health risks: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	<p>Environmental exposures during pregnancy and early childhood may cause problems in how a child develops. Learn more <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a></p>
<p>Because children are small and still developing, they are more easily affected by environmental contaminants that affect their health. Learn more about the connection between children’s health and the environment at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	<p>Kids are developing and more easily affected by #enviro health risks. Learn about #childrenshealth and the #enviro <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a></p>
<p>Children are exposed to indoor and outdoor environmental hazards that can affect their health. CDC’s Tracking Network equips public health officials to battle a variety of children’s health issues in our communities: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	<p>Kids are exposed to indoor &amp; outdoor health risks. Use @CDC_EPHTracking Network &amp; learn about #health and the #enviro <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a></p>

*next page*



Children’s Health and the Environment:

# Social Media Examples



**Goal: Raise awareness about the connection between public health and the environment via the Tracking Network**

Facebook	Twitter
<p>CDC’s Tracking Network uses information from many health resources to help us understand the connection between the environment and children’s health. Learn more at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	<p>@CDC_EPHTracking has a variety of info to help you learn about the connection between #childrenshealth and #enviro: <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a></p>
<p>Did you know that there’s a connection between children’s health and the environment? Check out other connections between health and the environment in your area: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	<p>Check out connections between #childrenshealth and the #enviro in your area through @CDC_EPHTracking Network: <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a></p>
<p>CDC’s Tracking Network can help us understand the geographic distribution and trends in children’s health and can provide descriptive clues to changes that may be influenced by environmental risk factors. <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	<p>@CDC_EPHTracking Network has data on #enviro factors that impact #childrenshealth. Learn more at <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a>.</p>
<p>CDC’s Tracking Network has data on a variety of environmental factors that can impact a child’s health. Discover how it can aid efforts for children’s health at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	

*next page*



Children's Health and the Environment:

# Social Media Examples



**Goal: Demonstrate Tracking Network value as a resource to attract people to the website**

Facebook	Twitter
Public health professionals: The Tracking Network has information on asthma hospital stays and asthma prevalence in children. Access this tool to help target your outreach: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a> .	#PublicHealth pros, use @CDC_EPHTracking Network to find #enviro health info to help make resource decisions: <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a>
The Tracking Network is making children's health data easier to access and use. Learn more at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a> .	@CDC_EPHTracking Network is making #childrenshealth incidence data easier to access and use. Learn more at <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a>
You work to protect people and save lives. Use CDC's Tracking Network to access environmental health data that helps you do just that! <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>	#Health and #enviro data can protect people and save lives! Check out @CDC_EPHTracking Network: <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a>
(INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME) is using CDC's Tracking Network to understand how public health and the environment are connected. What environmental health issues most concern you?	We're using the @CDC_EPHTracking Network to understand how #publichealth and the #environment are connected <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a>





# Social Media Examples



## Asthma

**Goal: Educate about the connection between asthma and the environment via the Tracking Network**

Facebook	Twitter
Air quality is a major public health and environmental concern. Learn more about the connection between air quality and children's asthma at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a> .	Air quality is a major #publichealth and #enviro concern. Learn more through @CDC_EPHTracking Network: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>
On average, children with asthma missed four days of school due to their breathing condition in 2008. Learn how children's asthma is connected to the environment at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a> .	Kids with #asthmaattacks missed an average of 4 school days in 2008. Learn about #enviro connections to #asthma <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>
(INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME) uses CDC's Tacking Network's information on the association between asthma and outdoor air quality to identify risk areas. Visit <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a> for more information.	Health Dept uses @CDC_EPHTracking Network for info on the connection between #asthma and the #enviro. Learn more <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>





# Social Media Examples



## Childhood Cancer

**Goal: Educate about the connection between childhood cancer and the environment via the Tracking Network**

Facebook	Twitter
<p>The most common childhood cancers are leukemias, cancers of the blood cells. See how leukemias may be related to environmental risks at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	<p>Leukemias are the most common childhood cancers. Learn about potential #enviro risks for #cancer <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a></p>
<p>Did you know that childhood cancers may be the result of a mix of genetic, environmental, and behavioral causes? Learn about environmental factors related to children's health at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	<p>@CDC_EPHTracking Network provides data on #childhoodcancer to help create a better understanding of #enviro factors <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a></p>
<p>CDC's Tracking Network provides data on the most common childhood cancers, helping to create a better understanding of patterns of cancers that may be related to environmental exposures. Learn more: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	<p>See what the @CDC_EPHTracking Network is doing to provide info on #enviro factors for #childhoodcancer <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a></p>
<p>Cancer kills more children aged 0 to 14 years than AIDS, asthma, diabetes, cystic fibrosis, and congenital anomalies combined. But CDC is on the case! See what CDC's Tracking Network is doing to provide information on environmental factors for childhood cancer: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a>.</p>	

*next page*



# Social Media Examples



## Childhood Lead Poisoning

**Goal: Educate about the connection between childhood lead poisoning and the environment via the Tracking Network**

Facebook	Twitter
Did you know that children are more vulnerable to lead poisoning than adults? Learn more about children’s health risks associated with lead in the environment at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a> .	Children are more vulnerable to lead poisoning than adults. Learn more about #enviro and #lead health risks at <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a>
Keep your child safe from environmental lead exposure – talk to your state or local health department about testing paint and dust from your home. Learn more about health risks associated with lead in the environment at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a> .	Keep your child safe from lead exposure. Check out @CDC_EPHTtracking Network to learn about #enviro risk <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a>
Lead is released in the environment during activities such as mining, manufacturing, and burning fossil fuels. Learn about the connection between lead and children’s health at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a> .	Lead is released into the #enviro through mining, manufacturing, and more. Learn about lead #health risks at <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a>
The main source of childhood lead poisoning is from lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in older homes. CDC’s Tracking Network offers more information on children’s environmental health risks linked to lead exposure: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking">www.cdc.gov/ephtracking</a> .	Lead-based paint and contaminated dust are 2 #enviro threats to #childrenshealth. Use @CDC_EPHTtracking to learn more <a href="http://bit.ly/eZiMpa">http://bit.ly/eZiMpa</a>