

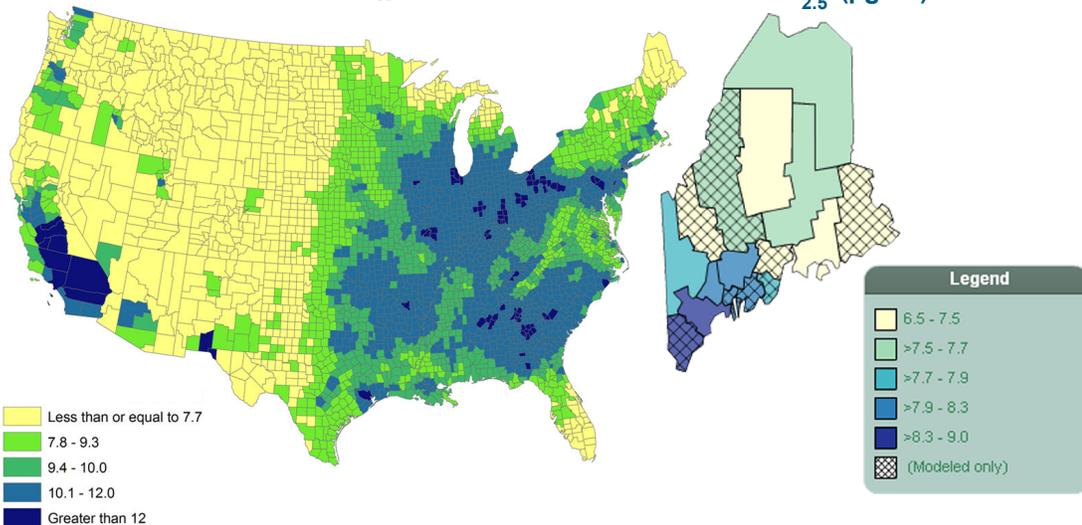
CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

The Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (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 Maine:

65 Age-adjusted Rate of Emergency Department Visits for Asthma - 2010
/10,000



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



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Housing and Childhood Lead Poisoning

Children under the age of 3 living in old housing are more likely than those living in newer housing to be poisoned by lead. That is because there is often dust from lead paint in homes built before 1950. In Maine, ingesting dust from lead paint is the most common way children are poisoned by lead. Experts use a reference level of 5 µg/dL to identify children with blood lead levels that are much higher than most children's levels; however, no safe level of lead has been identified. Even low levels of lead in children's blood have been shown to affect IQ, ability to pay attention, and academic achievement.

Maine's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program uses the Maine Tracking Network to analyze data about pre-1950 housing and children with lead poisoning. This analysis helps identify and monitor high-risk areas for childhood lead poisoning in order to target and evaluate community-based prevention initiatives.

Environmental Hazards



Percentage of pre-1950 homes in Maine's highest-risk community: **52%**;
Statewide: **36%**

Health Effects



Lead poisoning rate in Maine's highest risk community: **2.7%**;
Statewide: **0.9%**

Private Well Water Quality

More than half of Maine homes rely on private wells for drinking water. Many Maine wells have too much arsenic or other chemicals of concern. Too much arsenic in drinking water can put people at risk for health problems such as circulatory problems, skin damage, or an increased risk of cancer. Town-level private well water data on the Maine Tracking Network allows communities to understand local water quality issues in order to encourage well owners to test their water.

Environmental Hazards



45% of homes with private wells have tested the water for arsenic



10% of private wells have arsenic levels above EPA's* standard (10 ppb)

*Environmental Protection Agency