



# CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

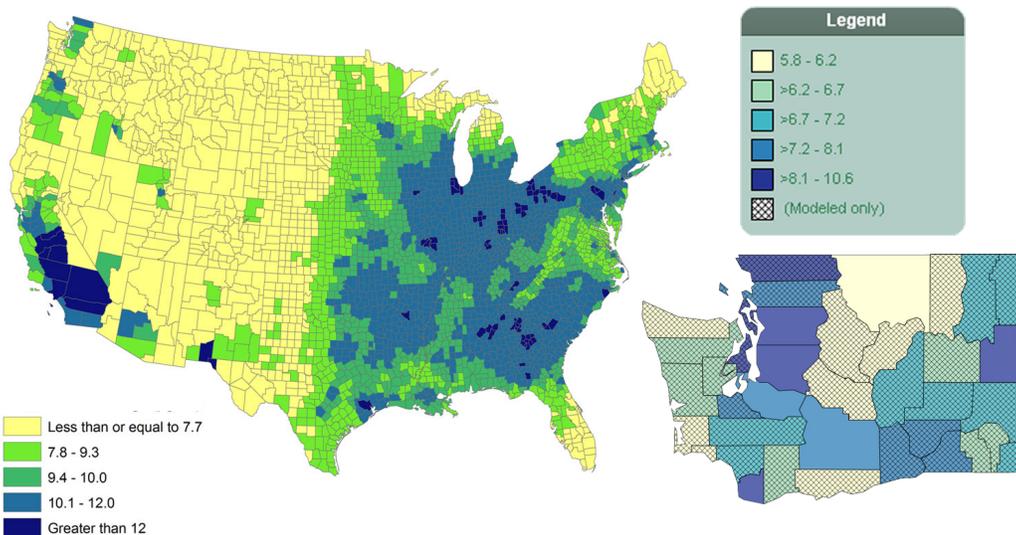
## Tracking Network

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<sub>2.5</sub>) 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<sub>2.5</sub>.

2011 Annual Average Ambient Concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> (µg/m<sup>3</sup>)



PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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 Washington:

**6** /10,000  
Age-adjusted Rate of Emergency Department Visits for Asthma - 2010

**26** /10,000  
Age-adjusted Rate of Hospitalizations for Heart Attacks (over 35) - 2010

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## Poverty, a Risk Factor in Childhood Asthma

The Washington Tracking Network is tracking health statistics along with community and socioeconomic factors. Socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and education levels, are associated with various adverse health outcomes. Poverty is a known risk factor for childhood asthma. The Washington Tracking Network displays data on asthma hospital stays for different age groups as well as poverty level by county. The program makes this information available to local health policymakers to help with decision making around health inequities in the state. This allows for targeted outreach to counties that have high asthma rates and a high percentage of population below the poverty level.

### Environmental Hazards



**More than 12%** of the population statewide lived below the poverty level in 2012



The median household income in Washington was about **\$55,000** in 2012

### Health Effects



In Washington, approximately **5,000** people are hospitalized with asthma each year



**About 20%** of those are children ages 0 - 4

## Radon Maps Lead to Public Awareness

Radon, a cancer-causing gas created by the decay in uranium, can seep into homes and buildings from bedrock. 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). Washington developed a geologic risk map for radon and is tracking elevated radon test results by zip code. Northeast Washington is at high risk and has zip codes with highest percentage of elevated tests in the state. Long-term exposure to radon can cause lung cancer. Washington's outreach focuses on areas with high risk and low testing and promotes the message, "Know your risk; the only way is to test".

### Environmental Hazards



The Puget Sound Basin is a medium risk area with **10-20%** of zip codes showing elevated levels in 2012