

On the Web

Take Action to Promote Environmental Health www.envirohealthaction.org

EnviroHealthAction is an education center for health professionals and others interested in environmental health. The site contains valuable information about the health effects of environmental contaminants, including arsenic, mercury, and *E. coli*.

Chronic exposure to environmental contaminants can cause an array of health effects, including cancers, neurological effects, reproductive and developmental outcomes, rashes, heart disease, diabetes, and immunity problems.

To learn more about environmental health, call the Physicians for Social Responsibility, at (202) 667-4260, write them at 1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 1012, Washington, DC, 20009, or e-mail the organization at info@envirohealthaction.org.

Safety Council Promotes Environmental Health www.nsc.org

The National Safety Council's Environmental Health Center (EHC) mission is to educate and influence society to adopt safety, health, and environmental policies, practices, and procedures that prevent and mitigate human suffering and economic losses arising from preventable causes.

EHC conducts a variety of outreach and education activities on various water issues, including drinking water and coastal and marine issues. In addition to these services, EHC also has information about flooding, hurricanes and coastal storms, and first aid.

For more information about EHC and its services, you may write to them at 1121 Spring Lake Drive, Itasca, IL 60143-3201. You also may call them at (630) 285-1121, or e-mail them info@nsc.org.



DRINK Makes Public Debut

www.epa.gov/safewater/drink/intro.html

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed the Drinking Water Research Information Network (DRINK) as a publicly accessible, Web-based system to track ongoing research that EPA and other partners from national, regional, and international research agencies and organizations conduct. DRINK will be used as a tool for assessing future research priorities to support regulatory development and implementation.



DRINK maintains descriptive information on research projects, including project title, abstract, start and end dates, principal investigator, and contact information. Users can conduct searches of this information to identify potentially relevant projects and to obtain detailed information from the partner, such as complete data sets and reports.

This site offers users and partners:

- an efficient means of determining the status of research across multiple organizations,
- a system to minimize duplication of research,
- a practical approach for locating research gaps, and
- a forum for communicating project status within the research community and with the public.

DRINK is capable of simultaneously searching two databases:

- The DRINK database, which will be populated with drinking water research information from EPA and other partners, and
- EPA's Environmental Information Management System (EIMS) database, which currently contains research information relevant to drinking water.

Through the connection of the two databases, DRINK provides a single source for ongoing research information. This resource is critical for the development of strategies to fill data gaps, identify key personnel for workgroup and public meetings, and strategically plan for rules under development.

For more information about DRINK, contact the U.S. EPA Office of Water, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water, Standards and Risk Management Division, or e-mail gonder.sharon@epa.gov.

IRIS Helps Public Understand Health Risks

www.epa.gov/iris/

The Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) database, prepared and maintained by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), contains information about how environmental exposure to various chemicals can affect human health. Although initially developed for EPA staff needing consistent information about these chemical substances, the information in IRIS is now available to the public.

EPA primarily uses the information for risk assessment. In a risk assessment, the extent to which a group of people has been or may be exposed to a certain chemical is determined. The agency then considers the kind and degree of hazard the chemical poses, thereby permitting it to estimate the present or potential health risk.

EPA uses the information it gathers in the risk management process to protect public health. Examples of risk management actions include:

- deciding how much of a chemical a company may discharge into a river;
- clarifying which substances may be stored at a hazardous waste disposal facility;
- verifying to what extent a hazardous waste site must be cleaned up;
- setting permit levels for discharge, storage, or transport;
- establishing levels for air emissions; and
- determining allowable levels of contamination in drinking water.

The heart of the IRIS system is its collection of computer files covering individual chemicals. These chemical files contain descriptive and quantitative information in two categories: oral reference doses and inhalation reference concentrations for chronic noncarcinogenic health effects, hazard identification, oral slope factors, and oral and inhalation unit risks for carcinogenic effects.

For more information about IRIS, call (202) 566-1676 or email hotline.iris@epa.gov.

NIEHS Offers Environmental Health Information

www.niehs.nih.gov

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) is one of 27 institutes and centers of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). NIEHS achieves its mission through multidisciplinary biomedical research programs, prevention and intervention efforts, and communication strategies that encompass training, education, technology transfer, and community outreach.

The institute's Web site contains an alphabetical listing of environmental health topics, along with fact sheets, pamphlets, research initiatives, and news features. The site also maintains a link to the Environmental Health Sciences Education page, which contains environmental health information for students, teachers, and scientists, including classroom materials, NIEHS resources, and professional development opportunities.

For more information, you may write to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, P.O. Box 12233, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709, or visit their Web site at www.niehs.nih.gov.



Site Supplies Environmental Health News

www.EnvironmentalHealthNews.org

This newsletter is published online daily at www.EnvironmentalHealthNews.org by Environmental Health Sciences, a not-for-profit organization founded in 2002 to help increase public understanding of emerging scientific links between environmental exposures and human health. The site contains news about environmental health issues, and visitors may sign up for a free newsletter, *Above the Fold*.

For more information about www.environmentalhealthnews.org, write to Environmental Health Sciences, P.O. Box 125, White Hall, Virginia. 22987-0125.

www.nesc.wvu.edu



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