



Collaborative on Health and the Environment - Washington



Biweekly Bulletin October 21, 2009

This bulletin lists upcoming events plus recent announcements, news and journal articles, calls for proposals and other items related to learning environmental contributors to human health in Washington State and the Pacific Northwest. They are archived and searchable on our website: <http://washington.chenw.org/bulletins.html>

CHE-WA Highlights

New Children's Environmental Health Toolkit

As part of the Northwest Children's Environmental Health Forum held earlier this month, a new searchable toolkit of resources on children's environmental health has been added to the [CHE-Washington website](#). Created by the Children's Environmental Health Working Group of CHE-Washington, the toolkit includes all the topics that were presented at the forum. Some materials are available in foreign languages. [Visit the toolkit](#).



Lessons Learned

Pedanius Dioscorides - "Lead makes the mind give way."

by Steven G. Gilbert, PhD, DABT



Pedanius Dioscorides was an ancient Greek physician, pharmacologist and botanist who was famous for writing his five-volume work *De Materia Medica*, which had a tremendous impact on toxicology. He identified the pharmacological properties, remedial effects and structural makeup (as best he could) of over one hundred plants previously unknown to Roman and Greek Physicians.

In the second century BCE, Dioscorides was said to have noted, "Lead makes the mind give way." In the 1920s the European League of Nations banned lead-based paint, a precautionary approach that protected child health by preventing lead poisoning. The US did not ban lead-based paint until 1978.

More on Pedanius Dioscorides: <http://toxipedia.org/x/uQE>

Looking back to go forward

Lessons Learned is a CHE-WA bulletin feature focusing on an historical event that provides an important lesson for ensuring a more sustainable and healthy environment. Please feel free to send suggestions to [Steve Gilbert](#).

Announcements

A daily news feed with articles and announcements is available on CHE's website: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/news/announce>.

Wipe out lead poisoning.

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 18-24, is set aside to educate parents and children about the dangers of lead exposure, especially lead-based paint hazards in housing. US Environmental Protection Agency.

[See related news articles: [Brown County Lead Coalition wants parents to be aware of dangers](#), [Lead poisoning can impact a child's development](#) and [15,000 people to move away from lead poisoning threat in central China](#)]

[New EPA information on insect repellents.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has launched a new web page containing product information on certain skin-applied insect repellents. EPA's goal is to provide the public with information on registered insect repellents and their effectiveness claims in a clear, consistent, and user-friendly format.

[WMA proposes action plan to protect health from climate change.](#)

A package of proposals designed to raise the world's awareness of the link between health and climate change and to minimize the risks of increased malnutrition, death, disease and injury, particularly among the most vulnerable populations, have been put forward by the World Medical Association.

[See a related news article: [Health 'forgotten' in climate talks](#)]

[California to set first hex chromium drinking water level.](#)

Hexavalent chromium (hex chrome), the notorious cancer-causing chemical made famous in the film Erin Brockovich, contaminates drinking water in over 500 California communities, according to environmental and public health experts. The California Environmental Protection Agency is taking public comment through today on a proposed level for hex chrome in drinking water.

[EPA administrator announces plan to retool and reinvigorate clean water enforcement program.](#)

The Clean Water Action Enforcement Plan is a first step in revamping the compliance and enforcement program. It seeks to improve the protection of our nation's water quality, raise the bar in federal and state performance and enhance public transparency. US Environmental Protection Agency.

[New website: Find Water Polluters Near You.](#)

The New York Times has compiled data on more than 200,000 facilities that have permits to discharge pollutants and collected responses from states regarding compliance.

[The future of U.S. chemicals policy conference videos.](#)

Videos of the "Future of U.S. Chemicals Policy conference are now available for viewing online.

[EPA issues final aircraft drinking water rule](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is issuing a final rule to ensure that safe and reliable drinking water is provided to aircraft passengers and crew.

[EPA publishes voluntary guidelines for methamphetamine laboratory cleanup.](#)

EPA has issued a document providing state and local governments technical guidance for methamphetamine lab cleanups.

[New video: Don't Mess With Mercury.](#)

As part of Children's Health month, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry today launched its "Don't Mess with Mercury" video in an effort to protect children from the dangers of mercury.

[Job opening: Wenatchee, Washington.](#)

The Chelan-Douglas Health District has an opening for an environmental health specialist to conduct routine public health inspections, review facility designs for code compliance and more. The position will stay open until filled.

[Job opening: Tumwater, Washington.](#)

The Washington State Department of Health has an opening for an asthma projects coordinator within the Community and Family Health Division. The opportunity closes on October 28, 2009.

Upcoming Events

Online Calendar. These and more upcoming events are listed in a searchable calendar: <http://www.chenw.org/cgi-bin/searchevents.cgi>.

1) The Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis and Air Pollution (MESA Air): Mid-Course Update

Thursday October 22, 2009

12:30 - 1:20 p.m.

Seattle, Washington

at the University of Washington Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Room T-435

Sponsor: University of Washington Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

Joel Kaufman, MD, MPH, will speak.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Sarah Fischer, fischs@u.washington.edu

2) What Does the Environment Have To Do With Medicine? Reporting Back from a Premiere Reproductive Society Conference

Wednesday October 28, 2009

11:00 a.m. Pacific / 2:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment Fertility and Reproductive Health Working Group

Join CHE-Fertility for a discussion that highlights the role of the Environment and Special Interest Group (ERSIG) at the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), a premiere reproductive society. ERSIG was established in 2007 and since then has promoted an environmental focus within ASRM. The mission of ERSIG is to enhance understanding of environmental factors on reproductive health through excellence in education, research, and clinical practice. We will hear reports on environmental health highlights from this year's ASRM conference, taking place in Atlanta, Georgia, October 17-21, 2009, from speakers Susan Benoff, PhD, and Michael Diamond, MD.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Julia Varshavsky, julia@healthandenvironment.org

3) Women's Health and the Environment Initiative

Monday November 2, 2009

1:00 p.m. Mountain / 3:00 p.m. Eastern / noon Pacific time

Sponsor: Women's Voices for the Earth

On this call we will discuss WHEI's transition to new leadership. We'd like to share our vision for the future of WHEI as well as get your input and thoughts. We'd also like to take suggestions for topics for the following learning call to focus on.

Price: free

Contact: Cassidy Randall, [406-543-3747](tel:406-543-3747) or cassidy@womenandenvironment.org

4) 2009 National Forum on Contaminants in Fish

Monday through Thursday, November 2 - 5, 2009

Portland, Oregon
at the Governor Hotel, 614 SW 11th Avenue

Sponsor: US EPA and co-hosted by the Oregon Department of Human Services

This event brings together public health and environmental professionals from governmental agencies, industry, environmental and health advocacy groups and other interested parties to discuss the many issues related to the risks and benefits of fish consumption.

Price: see the Registration tab on the website

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: see the Contacts tab on the website

5) IPM Professional Workshop

Wednesday November 4, 2009

7:15 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (full-day and half-day options)

West Seattle, Washington

at South Seattle Community College

Sponsor: Seattle Public Utilities and funded by the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County with support from South Seattle Community College and Lake Washington Technical College

The first of two professional workshops, this one is titled "From Edible Landscapes to Green Infrastructure: The Full Toolkit of IPM Approaches." The Green Gardening Program is an effort to promote alternatives to lawn and garden chemicals. A full agenda is available on the flyer on the website. One session will be conducted in Spanish.

Price: full day \$50 (includes continental breakfast, lunch, snacks, and sessions) or half day \$35 (does not include lunch)

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: **206-449-1149**

6) Navigating the Scientific Evidence to Ensure Prevention

Wednesday November 11, 2009

10:00 a.m. Pacific / 1:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

In August, CHE leaders, scientists, clinicians and community partners participated in the workshop Navigating the Science to Improve Prevention. This call will focus on the efforts being undertaken to translate the emerging science in environmental reproductive health into timely action in clinical and policy arenas. Complex scientific evidence is constantly emerging about how the environment affects our health. This evidence is often murky or inconclusive. How can clinicians, policymakers and others make decisions that protect health when the evidence isn't cut-and-dried? In response to these difficult questions, an interdisciplinary group of 23 scientists, clinicians and community/patient-based partners convened to develop the Navigation Guide - a methodology that forges the strengths of evidence-based medicine and environmental health and can be used to vet the scientific evidence related to reproductive environmental health in a timely and transparent manner. This call will give the background for the workshop and provide several participants time to reflect on real-world applications for the methodology. Featured speakers will include Tracey Woodruff, PhD, MPH; Jeanne Conry, MD, PhD; and Pablo Rodriguez, MD.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: CHE, info@healthandenvironment.org

7) New Habits of Mind for New Solutions

Friday November 20, 2009

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Seattle, Washington

at NWETC Headquarters, 650 South Orcas Street, Suite 220

Sponsor: EOS Alliance

This eight-hour class is about systems thinking, systems in the natural world, and ways to increase our ability to address complex problems. Our class will give you the competence and confidence to start using systems thinking in your organizations and communities to better understand complex problems - whether you find them in the natural environment or in social systems. Participants will learn what makes a system a system, and why systems thinking is so useful and so necessary in our world. We'll share our understanding of the ways and habits of systems thinking, as well as how to apply these habits. We'll learn about some systems thinking tools, such as causal loops and behavior over time graphs, and how to identify feedback loops. We'll use the "iceberg model" to deepen our understanding of leverage points for change. At the end, we'll put it all together - applications and practice. Learning will occur through hands-on activities such as small group conversations, large group dialogue, individual reflection, system thinking games, viewing personal stories through a new lens, and the collaborative exploration of complex problems. Both instructors' intense interest in the natural world has been enriched through the study and application of systems thinking.

Price: \$195, \$155 reduced tuition for Native American tribes; government employees; nonprofits; students; and NAEP, NEBC, NWAEP members

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Northwest Environmental Training Center, [206-762-1976](tel:206-762-1976)

News and Journal Articles

[Exposure to p,p'-DDE: A risk factor for type 2 diabetes.](#)

Tuesday, October 20, 2009

The results from the present case-control study, including a follow-up design, confirms that p,p'-DDE exposure can be a risk factor for type 2 diabetes. PLoS One.

[See a related news article: [DDT may cause androgyny in babies -- experts](#)]

[How safe is your drinking water?](#)

Tuesday, October 20, 2009

An estimated one in 10 Americans have been exposed to drinking water that contains dangerous chemicals or fails to meet a federal health benchmark in other ways. We're talking carcinogens in the tap water of major American cities and unsafe chemicals in drinking water wells. Fresh Air, NPR.

[See related articles: [Atrazine in our water](#), [An assessment of exposure to prescribed estrogens in drinking water](#), [Senate Committee holds hearing for Lejeune water contamination](#), [Pollution an enduring legacy at old missile sites](#), [Boxer plans hearing on toxic school drinking water](#), [GRU won't remove fluoride: commission will vote](#) and [Contaminated wells threaten 2 million people in Ha Noi](#)]

[Risky beauty business.](#)

Tuesday, October 20, 2009

A group of advocates are concerned the chemicals used in manicures, and especially acrylic nails, are affecting the health of nail salon workers. American Public Media.

[Mercury levels similar in autistic, normal kids.](#)

Tuesday, October 20, 2009

Children with autism have mercury levels similar to those of other kids, suggesting the mysterious disorder is caused by a range of factors rather than "a single smoking gun,"

researchers said on Monday. Reuters.

[See a related article: [Why are preemies more likely to develop autism?](#)]

Fossil fuels' hidden cost is in billions, study says.

Tuesday, October 20, 2009

Burning fossil fuels costs the United States about \$120 billion a year in health costs, mostly because of thousands of premature deaths from air pollution, the National Academy of Sciences reported in a study issued Monday. New York Times.

[See related articles: [Smog tougher on the obese](#), [Effect of early life exposure to air pollution on development of childhood asthma](#), [Air pollution worse on one side of the street](#), [State targets school bus emissions](#), [New York enacts ban on open waste burning](#), [Study finds danger in the air around Tonawanda Coke](#), [Particulate matter in the air and its origins in coal-burning regions](#), ['We have so far to go' in pollution fight -- EPA air chief](#), [Air pollutants from abroad a growing concern, says new report](#), [Canada quietly asks EPA to weaken anti-pollution measures](#), [Haifa kids at highest risk from pollution](#)]

Household insecticides may be linked to autoimmune diseases.

Monday, October 19, 2009

New research suggests a link between women's exposure to household insecticides -- including roach and mosquito killers -- and the autoimmune disorders rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Georgia.

Is your new car making you sick?

Monday, October 19, 2009

It used to be that buying a new car was a totally positive experience. That was until somebody started testing the interiors for toxins. That new-car smell is the factory-fresh, high-tech materials in the seats and on the dash undergoing off-gassing. Sydney Morning Herald, Australia.

Controversy heats up as cities look to incinerators.

Monday, October 19, 2009

Waste-to-energy is being touted as a green technology that can produce energy, help with global warming, reduce waste and generate revenue. But a growing body of evidence suggests the hidden costs of incinerators outweigh the benefits. Canwest News Service.

Halloween face paint can have a scary side.

Monday, October 19, 2009

A recall of a face paint in May that gave some Girl Scouts rashes is one of the reasons the Food and Drug Administration is warning parents to be careful that Halloween face paints don't cause allergic reactions and other problems. USA Today.

Center for Excellence in Children's Environmental Health launches.

Sunday, October 18, 2009

The Center provides consultations, referrals and medical management to children diagnosed with diseases that are possibly linked to toxins in the environment and to children who have been exposed to toxic substances. Long Island Press, New York.

A new shade of hospital green.

Sunday, October 18, 2009

The hospital has nurtured an atmosphere that supports green initiatives -- everything from setting up recycling bins in patient areas to figuring out ways to prevent its pharmaceutical waste from ending up in landfills. Burlington Free Press, Vermont

Green Intelligence: Creating Environments That Protect Human Health.

Sunday, October 18, 2009

One of the most significant lessons to be learned from books such as this one is how one country's actions impact significantly the rest of the world. Washington Times.

Pesticide endosulfan considered for global ban.

Saturday, October 17, 2009

Endosulfan is under consideration for inclusion on the list of persistent organic pollutants

(POPs) under the 166-member Stockholm Convention -- a treaty to protect human health and the environment from chemicals. Reuters.

[Government recognizes more illnesses caused by Agent Orange.](#)

Saturday, October 17, 2009

The list of illnesses the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes as being caused by exposure to Agent Orange during the war continues to increase. Carrol County Times, Maryland.

[Green spaces 'improve health.'](#)

Friday, October 16, 2009

There is more evidence that living near a 'green space' has health benefits. Research in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health says the impact is particularly noticeable in reducing rates of mental ill health. BBC.

[See a related article: [Quiet green spaces needed to reduce stress in cities, study says](#)]

[Deforestation and the true cost of Europe's cheap meat.](#)

Friday, October 16, 2009

Cheap meat has become a way of life in much of Europe, but the full price is being paid across Latin America as vast soya plantations and their attendant chemicals lead to poisonings and violence. London Guardian, United Kingdom.

[US report confirms smoking bans cut heart attacks.](#)

Friday, October 16, 2009

Indoor smoking bans are effective at lowering the risk of heart attack, even among nonsmokers, by reducing exposure to secondhand smoke, a panel of U.S. health experts confirmed in a report on Thursday. Reuters Health.

[See a related article: [Smoking a factor in infant death disparities](#)]

[Radiation overdoses point up dangers of CT scans.](#)

Friday, October 16, 2009

At a time when Americans receive far more diagnostic radiation than ever before, the cases underscore the risks posed by a diagnostic tool when used incorrectly. New York Times.

[See a related article: [CT scans and cancer: How to minimize your risk](#)]

[Giving babies Tylenol may blunt vaccines' effects.](#)

Friday, October 16, 2009

Giving babies Tylenol to prevent fever when they get childhood vaccinations may backfire and make the shots a little less effective, surprising new research suggests. Associated Press.

[Is nanotechnology regulatable? Reporting from the Nano Summit.](#)

Thursday, October 15, 2009

On October 8-9, roughly 150 invited guests -- graduate students, researchers, government officials, and consultants -- gathered in North Carolina to discuss priorities and provide recommendations to businesses and policy makers to ensure the safe development of nanotechnology. Institute for Ethics & Emerging Technologies.

[See related articles: [Tiny technology may yield major finds -- and possible perils](#) and [Nanotechnology: sci-fi fears vs. a world of innovation](#)]

[\\$2.5M verdict over birth defects blamed on Paxil.](#)

Thursday, October 15, 2009

The closely watched verdict handed down Tuesday in Philadelphia was the first of about 600 similar cases pending across the country that blame Paxil for heart problems and other birth defects. Associated Press.

[Analysis of cellphone studies finds tumor risk.](#)

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Scientists looking at 23 studies involving almost 38,000 people initially saw no connection between cellphone use and the development of tumors. But a closer look at eight of the highest quality studies tells another story. Los Angeles Times, California.

[See related articles: [For kids: Are cell phones safe?](#) and [Attack of the antennas, Immunohistochemical study of postnatal neurogenesis after whole-body exposure to electromagnetic fields](#)]

Blinded by the light.

Tuesday, October 13, 2009

In every corner of the globe tonight, our nighttime sky shines brighter than it did less than 10 years ago with potentially serious consequences to humans, animals and ecosystem. Miller-McCune.

Cancer-causing virus linked to chronic fatigue.

Saturday, October 10, 2009

Researchers have linked an infectious virus known to cause cancer in animals to chronic-fatigue syndrome, a major discovery for sufferers of the condition and one that concerned scientists for its potential public-health implications. Wall Street Journal.

8 surprising ways to prevent breast cancer.

Saturday, October 10, 2009

Choices in the kitchen -- from the foods we eat to the way we cook them -- can affect our risk of breast cancer. The Daily Green.

Melting glaciers bring 1980s pollution revival.

Saturday, October 10, 2009

Bad hair and shoulder pads are not the only things from the 1980s that we'd rather not see again. Nasty chemicals banned in that decade are also on the list. Unfortunately, melting Alpine glaciers are generating a revival of toxic organic pollutants. New Scientist.

Toxic chemicals found in Maine health workers.

Friday, October 09, 2009

Doctors and nurses in 10 states, including Maine, tested positive for at least 24 different toxic chemicals in their blood and other body fluids in a study released Thursday by the national organization Physicians for Social Responsibility. Bangor Daily News, Maine.

[See a related article: [Study: Toxic chemicals endangering health](#)]

Event promotes environmental, health benefits of walking to school.

Thursday, October 08, 2009

On Wednesday, a number of schools in different districts celebrated International Walk to School Day -- to promote the virtues of children walking to school. Sacramento Bee, California.

Arsenic in rice: a recipe for nutrient loss.

Thursday, October 08, 2009

Exposure to arsenic, a class 1 carcinogen for which there is no safe dose, affects hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Food could be a significant source of arsenic. In some regions, high arsenic levels may be depressing the micronutrients people need to stay healthy and fight disease. Environmental Science & Technology.

Concerned about BPA: Check your receipts.

Thursday, October 08, 2009

Some -- but not all -- cash-register and credit-card receipts can be rich sources of exposure to BPA, a hormone-mimicking pollutant. Green chemist John Warner claims that receipts are the biggest BPA exposure source for people in urban environments. Science News.

[See a related article: [Scientists chastise government for drawing out BPA study](#)]

Endocrine disruptors in our food?

Thursday, October 08, 2009

The Cascade network of excellence is studying the ability of certain of these molecules present in our food to disrupt our hormonal system. Research.eu. Brussels, Belgium.

Common air pollutants react and make more pollution.

Wednesday, October 07, 2009

Common air pollutants can react with one another to form highly reactive and toxic chlorine gasses, reports a study published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Environmental Health News.

[Kids' weight a factor in hospital admission.](#)

Wednesday, October 07, 2009

Overweight or underweight children who are seen in the emergency department are more likely to be admitted to the hospital, and to stay longer, than normal-weight youngsters, according to a study reported Monday. Reuters Health.

[Regulators plan to study risks of atrazine.](#)

Wednesday, October 07, 2009

New studies linking atrazine in drinking water with birth defects, low birth weights and reproductive problems in humans have prompted the EPA to study its effects. New York Times.

[See a related journal article: [Chronic exposure to the herbicide atrazine causes mitochondrial dysfunction and insulin resistance](#)]

Many of the news articles above come from [Environmental Health News](#).

The Collaborative on Health and the Environment offers this information as a service but does not endorse any of the events, articles or announcements.

Companion bulletins are available for different audiences:

- For those interested in general children's environmental health: http://www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/childrens_health/bulletins
- For those interested in environmental health and learning and developmental disabilities: <http://www.iceh.org/LDDIbulletins.html>

While there is overlap with this bulletin, there are some events and announcements unique to those bulletins.

If you would like to join the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE) and the Washington State Regional Group, please complete the application on the CHE website: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/application> Joining CHE means receiving up to four email messages a month from the CHE National listserv. CHE costs nothing to join and the benefit is shared information and opportunities for further engagement, if you choose. Be sure to mark that you want to join the Washington State regional group at the bottom of the application.

Nancy Snow
Collaborative on Health and the Environment

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