

**WA State Environmental Health Association
Children's Environmental Health Training
August 2011**

Summary of Key Messages

I. Children are not little adults.

- Children's Environmental Health focuses on chemical contaminants and the health effects results from exposure during childhood.
- Children are not small adults. Children's bodies are rapidly growing and changing; as they do, untold opportunities for health impacts resulting from chemical exposure are possible.
- A child's environment should be evaluated using a holistic approach. This includes evaluating where they live, learn and play.

To learn more.....

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/content/homepage.htm>

II. Maintain healthy housing.

Follow the Seven Principles of Healthy Housing from the National Center for Healthy Housing:

1. Keep it Dry
2. Keep it Clean
3. Keep it Pest Free
4. Keep it Ventilated
5. Keep it Safe
6. Keep it Contaminant Free
7. Keep it Maintained

III. Prevent childhood lead poisoning.

1. Exposure to lead harms a child's developing brain, affecting behavior and ability to learn. There is no safe blood lead level.
2. Eliminating lead poisoning is a health equity issue that presents cultural, linguistic, and geographic challenges.
3. Every year about 50-60 children in Washington are found to have a blood lead level over 10 µg/dL. In addition, hundreds of children are found with blood lead levels over 5 µg/dL, levels known to cause intellectual and behavioral deficits.
4. In Washington, lead poisoning prevention should be primarily addressed through a Healthy Homes approach. There are many ways that housing affects health. Public Health has a role in ensuring that all WA children should live in clean, healthy, non-toxic, affordable housing.
5. Some cultures use traditional remedies that may contain lead. For example, in Hispanic communities, the illness *empacho*, is sometimes treated with remedies containing from 70% to 97% lead. Help families prevent lead poisoning in a respectful, culturally competent way, by talking to them about culturally appropriate non-toxic remedies for *empacho*, such as teas or massage.
6. There are some resources available to assist in an elevated blood lead level investigation. Contact Lauren Jenks at Department of Health for help in accessing needed resources. (360-236-3359 or lauren.jenks@doh.wa.gov)

IV. Know about Chemical Action Plans and PBT's.

1. Chemical Action Plans (CAPs) identify, characterize, and evaluate uses and releases of PBTs (such as lead) and recommend actions to protect human health and the environment.
2. PBTs are persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic chemicals that remain in the environment for a long time (persist), build up in organisms and in the food chain (bioaccumulate), and are harmful to the health of people or other species (toxic).
3. Prevention is the smartest, cheapest and healthiest approach to reduce health effects of PBTs like lead. Once they are in use, they have effects for generations and they are very expensive to clean up.
4. The Lead CAP found that old lead-based paint is still the largest source of lead for children, but there are many other sources of lead that may be important sources for individual children (or adults). Other sources that may be important include hobbies, take home lead from work, contaminated soil, and consumer products. All sources add up to an individual's dose of lead.
5. Ecology PBT Web Page: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/pbt/>

Ecology Lead CAP Web Page: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/pbt/lead.html>

