

PREVENTION Counts

Volume 25 Number 4

www.coalitionforprevention.org

Fall 2010

“**Prevention** is caring about human outcomes.
In this regard, it is pre-term infants **supported**,
it is viruses **foiled**, it is alcohol **avoided**,
it is thyroid **replaced**,
it is phenylalanine **suppressed**, lead **eliminated**,
vitamins **embraced**, enzymes **measured**,
and genes **coded**.
But especially, beyond those,
it is food, transportation, housing,
respite and clean environments.
It is little children guided and stimulated,
it is mothers who are challenged and getting help.
It is infants born who
are **wanted, expected and valued**.
It is **wrestling** with inequalities and **striving**
for justice...”

Allen C. Crocker
Allen C. Crocker M.D.

1985

**Celebrating 25 years of Prevention
Education and Advocacy in New Jersey**

2010

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Source: <http://www.njparentlink.nj.gov/>

Protect Children From Environmental Hazards: Mercury, Ozone, Carbon Monoxide, Particulate Matter and Lead

What is mercury?

Mercury is a silver-gray liquid metal, that's also known as "quick silver". It is a hazardous chemical that, even in small amounts, can cause serious health problems. It can linger indoors for months or even years, and it slowly evaporates into the air. Its vapors cannot be seen or smelled, but breathing them can cause harmful effects.



Where is mercury found?

- ✓ Mercury is used to make many home products including thermometers, electrical switches, fluorescent lights, thermostats, and batteries.
- ✓ In some cultural traditions, mercury is used as a folk remedy or for spiritual practice.
- ✓ Some utility devices in your home may contain mercury, such as pressure control units attached to your gas meter.
- ✓ Certain instruments used by plumbers can contain mercury. Sometimes these instruments can leak or spill in your home.
- ✓ Certain types of fish contain mercury in a form known as methylmercury. When we eat those fish, it is absorbed by our bodies.



Problem Pollutants

Possible Health Effects

The Truth About Ozone

There are two different places where ozone (O₃) occurs in the air: the ozone layer in the upper atmosphere, and ozone at ground level. The ozone layer in the upper atmosphere protects us, like sunscreen, from the sun's harmful rays. The "hole" in this ozone layer, enlarged by human-made chemicals, is of great concern.

Ozone that occurs at ground level is a pollutant. It is formed by the reaction of sunlight with emissions from vehicles we drive and products we use. Unfortunately, we can't pump this lower level ozone into the upper atmosphere to fill the "hole." Ozone levels peak regularly in the early afternoon and are higher during the summer.

- Irritates mucous membranes of the respiratory system causing shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, chest pain, and headaches.
- Damages the individual air sacs and airways in the lung where oxygen and carbon dioxide are exchanged, reducing lung capacity over time.
- Increases sensitivity to allergens.

Carbon Monoxide




Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas emitted in motor vehicle exhaust and other combustion processes. It is more concentrated near busy roads and intersections. Carbon monoxide levels are higher in winter because of stagnant air conditions. For every 29 miles you drive, one pound of carbon monoxide is emitted into the air we breathe!

- Reduces oxygen levels reaching the brain, heart, and other tissues by obstructing the work of red blood cells. This may cause reduced alertness and decreased ability to perform basic tasks.
- May increase the risk of heart disease and cause chest pain in individuals with coronary heart disease.
- May promote the long-term development of arteriosclerosis (abnormal thickening and hardening of blood vessel walls).

Particulate Matter

Particulate matter (PM) is a problem in the hot, dry climate of Tucson. PM consists of small particles, such as soot and dust, which can be visible to the naked eye or microscopic in size. It comes from motor vehicle emissions, earth-moving activities, tire and brake wear, dust from unpaved surfaces and other sources. Because of its small size, PM bypasses the body's filtering system and can be very harmful. Toxic and cancer-causing chemicals can be carried by particulate matter into the lungs.

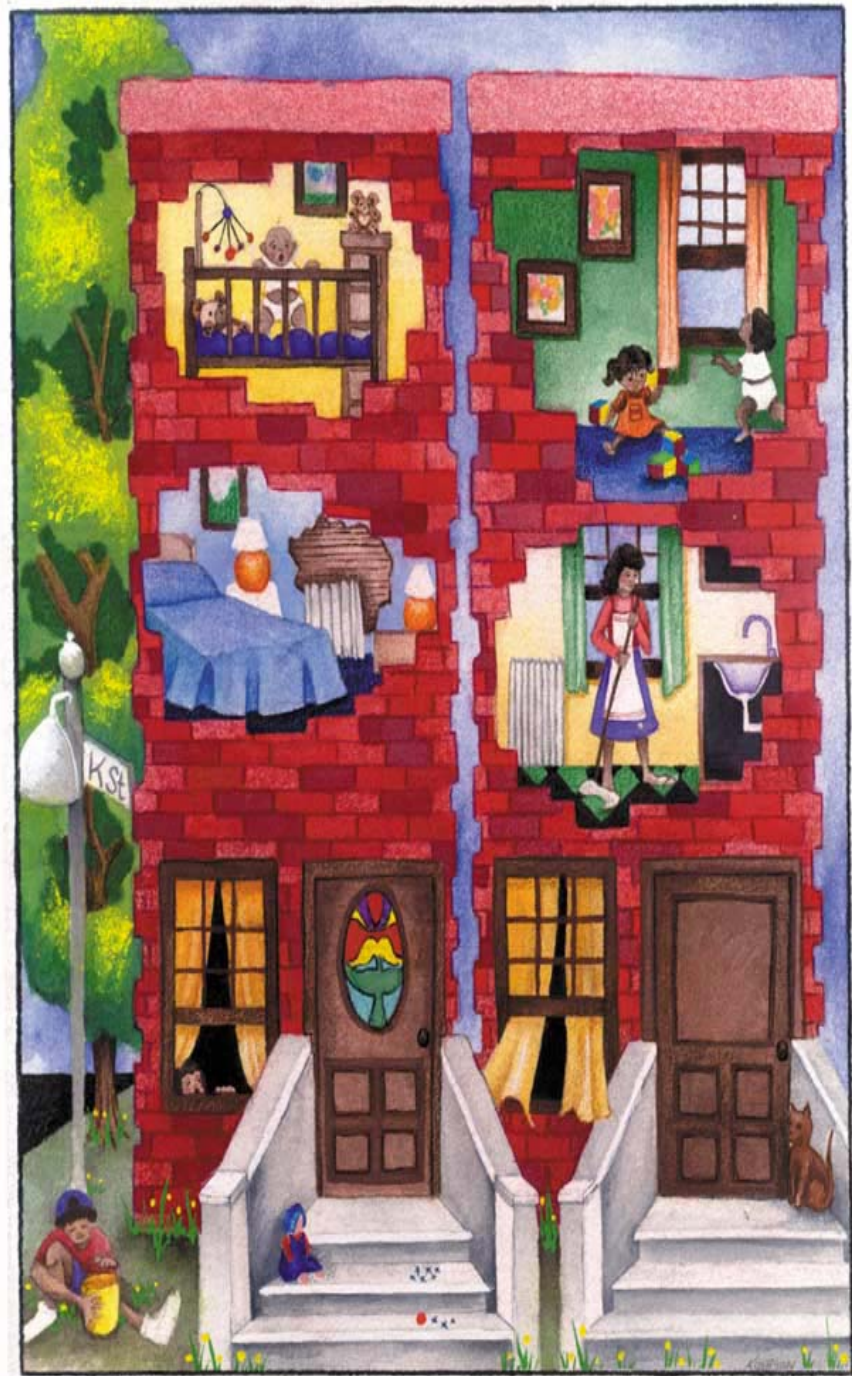
- May cause breathing difficulties and respiratory pain.
- May cause irritations to the nose, throat, and ear canal which are often mistaken for allergic reactions.
- May clog the lungs and lymph nodes. May diminish lung function, especially in children.
- May weaken the immune system and lower resistance to infection.
- May increase the incidence and severity of acute bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, emphysema and other severe lung illnesses.
- May cause heart attacks, strokes, and premature death.

Problem Pollutants		Possible Health Effects
 <p>O₃</p> <p>The Truth About Ozone</p> <p>There are two different places where ozone (O₃) occurs in the air: the ozone layer in the upper atmosphere, and ozone at ground level. The ozone layer in the upper atmosphere protects us, like sunscreen, from the sun's harmful rays. The "hole" in this ozone layer, enlarged by human-made chemicals, is of great concern.</p> <p>Ozone that occurs at ground level is a pollutant. It is formed by the reaction of sunlight with emissions from vehicles we drive and products we use. Unfortunately, we can't pump this lower level ozone into the upper atmosphere to fill the "hole." Ozone levels peak regularly in the early afternoon and are higher during the summer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritates mucous membranes of the respiratory system causing shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, chest pain, and headaches. • Damages the individual air sacs and airways in the lung where oxygen and carbon dioxide are exchanged, reducing lung capacity over time. • Increases sensitivity to allergens. 	
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Sources: *Protect your Family From Mercury in your Home*; EPA Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation; <http://www.epa.gov/ost/fish> *Air Pollution and Your Health*; Arizona Pima County Air Program; *Lead Poisoning and Your Children*; EPA Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxins.

Protect Your Children From Lead Poisoning

- 1 Get your child tested for lead poisoning, even if he or she
- 2 Clean floors, windows and other surfaces weekly. Use a mop, sponge, or paper towel with warm water and a general all-purpose cleaner or a cleaner made specifically for lead.
- 3 Reduce the risk of lead paint. Make sure your child is not chewing on anything covered with lead paint.
- 4 Don't try to remove lead paint yourself.
- 5 Don't bring lead dust into your home from work or a hobby.
- 6 Have your water tested. If the cold water hasn't been used for more than a few hours, let it run for 15–30 seconds before drinking it or cooking with it.
- 7 Eat right and don't store food in high lead pottery.



***Lead poisoning is a serious problem for young children
the younger the child, the greater the risk.***

Source: www.epa.gov/lead

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week October 24-30, 2010 <http://www.lead safenj.org>

New Jersey Kids Count 2010

New Jersey children and families begin this new decade with the state and nation in an economic downturn that has been marked by widespread job losses, an increased rate of child poverty and a growing number of households without enough to eat. These challenges are reflected in the measurements of child wellbeing in this report. *New Jersey Kids Count 2010* also shows that in the midst of this tough economy the state has achieved important successes for children and families. New Jersey has a nationally acclaimed preschool program that changes lives. More than 40,000 young children are enrolled in this high quality, full day program that increases their chances of success in school and in life. New Jersey is also ahead of many states in efforts to provide health coverage to uninsured children. The state has reduced the number of children without health insurance by 11 percent since 2004. It has also doubled the number of needy families receiving state assistance to pay home heating bills. These achievements make a real and important difference for children, for families and for the future of the state. These successes provide a foundation on which to build.

Successes to Build On

- Enrollment in full day, state funded preschool rose 12 percent over five years.
- Students in low income school districts are narrowing the achievement gap. Their performance on state assessments moved closer to the state average in the five years ending in 2008.
- Median family income in the state rose 4 percent over the five year period to \$86,613.
- More New Jersey households are getting to pay home heating bills: There was a 58 percent increase in the number served by a federal heating assistance program and a doubling of households assisted by a state program.
- Fewer babies are dying before their first birthday. The infant mortality rate in New Jersey fell 8 percent over the five years ending in 2006, the most recent data available.
- The state Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) has sharply reduced the number of abused or neglected children placed in group homes or residential centers. The number placed in such institutional settings plunged 47 percent from 2004 to 2009. That is higher than the overall 25 percent decline in the number of children in out of home care.
- The number of youth arrested or placed in juvenile detention dropped sharply over five years.

Challenges to Meet

- More than one in eight children, 13 percent, were in a family living in poverty in 2008, up from 12 percent the previous year.
- Despite the increased number of children living in poverty, fewer were in families receiving welfare — cash assistance from the government.
- Housing costs in New Jersey present a heavy burden for renters and homeowners. Close to half spent more than the recommended 30 percent of income for housing. That leaves little for food, clothing and other essentials.
- Low income families fare worst with housing costs: In New Jersey, 82 percent of children in low-income families had household housing costs exceeding 30 percent of income in 2008, compared to 66 percent nationally.
- One in 10 households in New Jersey does not have enough food, according to a three-year average of data from 2006 to 2008. That is up from the prior three years.
- Even with a reduction in the number of uninsured children in the state, more than one in 10 children had no health coverage in 2008.
- The number of babies born to teenagers rose in 2006 after falling in prior years.

(Continued on page 6)

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New Jersey ranked 7th best in the nation on these measures of child wellbeing, up from 9th place last year. New Hampshire ranked 1st and Mississippi last. In the region, New York ranked 15th, Connecticut ranked 8th and Pennsylvania 23rd.

The Percentage of Infants and Toddlers Who Are Vaccinated Has Fallen

Fewer than 3 out of 4 two-year-olds had been immunized against disease in 2008, a drop from 2004 when more than 4 out of 5 were receiving vaccines. The number of children tested for lead poisoning was up, while the number who tested positive was down sharply.

Preventing Childhood Illness	2004	2006	2007	2008	% Change 04-08
Percentage of children immunized by age 2	84	77	78	73	-13
	2003	2005	2006	2007	% Change 03-07
Children tested for lead (0-16)	172,932	196,335	200,581	186,041	8
Children with high levels of lead	5,230	4,547	3,653	2,837	-46
Percentage of children with high levels of lead	3	2	2	2	-50

Public School Enrollment in Grades K-12 Has Fallen Slightly

The number of children in public school grades kindergarten through 12th dropped by 1 percent. The number placed in special education rose slightly from 2004 to 2008. More than one out of every seven public school children is in special education.

Public School Enrollment	2004-05	2007-08	2008-09	% Change
Total enrollment	1,390,826	1,378,631	1,377,728	-1%
Public School Special Education Enrollment	2003-04	2006-07	2007-08	% Change
Total enrollment	1,380,882	1,387,963	1,378,631	0%
Special education enrollment	208,804	215,539	215,444	3%
Percent special education students	15%	16%	16%	3%

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PREVENTION Counts
is funded by the
DDD-Office
for Prevention of
Developmental
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