

THE UTAH ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING NETWORK



What is the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network?

The Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (EPHTN) provides information communities can use to improve their residents' environmental health. This information comes from a nationwide network, run by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), that displays health data and environmental data in one place. The network tracks hazards in the environment that may be harmful to health and create negative health outcomes. The EPHTN links this information together to provide an important picture of how health is influenced by our environment. Environmental hazards are materials in the air, water, soil and food that are harmful to health. The network is the first of its kind and contains local, state and national data.

The network tracks hazards in the environment that may be harmful to health as well as the health problems they may cause.

What Does the Network Do?

The EPHTN tracks environmental hazards and disease. It is designed to link data about hazards to data about health effects. The portals house data about health issues like cancer, asthma and birth defects, and environmental hazards like air pollution. The EPHTN is always working to add even more data. For example, the CDC has funded efforts to increase biomonitoring, which measures people's contact with hazardous materials in the environment. Knowing the amount of hazardous material people take into their bodies can provide better information about contact with environmental hazards.

What Are the Benefits of the Network?

This information is useful to many people. The public is able to access indicators about health and the environment and identify local health issues and support local public health actions. Researchers are able to use the data to explore the risks of environmentally-related health problems. Governments can use the data to help craft laws and regulations, and find areas that need the most attention. The network can also serve to help measure the impact of environmental or public health programs, such as measuring blood lead levels in children.

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Why Do We Need a Tracking Network?

The environment is important to our health. We know that some hazards in the environment can cause disease, but there are many other hazards with unknown health effects. Because different groups collect data on the environment and on health, the data are in different places and in different formats. This makes associations hard to study. The EPHTN provides a single location for both environmental and health data so the data can be viewed and used together.



What Kind of Data Can I Find?

The EPHTN provides environmental and health data on the national and state data portals. Each portal contains health indicator profiles which provide a “snapshot” of a current health effect. Users can also find a custom query system that provides users with a way to define measures and look at more specific data in a format of their choice. Users can also export and print this information.

Data Available on the UEPHTN Portal Include:

- Asthma
- Air quality
- Cancer
- Heart attack
- Carbon monoxide
- Blood lead levels
- Radon
- Drinking water
- Birth defects

What is Secure Data?

The network supports the exchange of data between partners and users. While much of the data is available to the public, users can apply to have access to varied levels of secured data, depending on their roles and needs. This ensures sensitive data and systems remain protected and secure.

Secure data contains some of the same type of data we have on the public side of IBIS-PH but because of the nature of the data, we must restrict access. This data unsuppressed and can be found at much smaller geographies such as census tract and zip code. Because this data is so sensitive it can not be provided to the general public to stay in line with privacy laws. An application process is in place for those who have need for this data and can be found on our website at <http://health.utah.gov/enviroepi/activities/EPHTP/NewEPHT/securedata.html>.

Who is in the Network?

The CDC is funding 23 state health departments including Utah, and 6 universities of public health, to design and maintain the network. Funded states and universities work with communities and other groups to gather meaningful data. CDC is also working with the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and other groups to enhance the network.



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Do Local Organizations Have a Role?

Members of local organizations are also contributing to the network. The Utah EPHTN trains local health departments and other local organizations how to use the network to investigate local environmental concerns. Partner health and environmental groups also add to the project by participating on project committees.

Where Do The Data Come From?

The EPHTN relies on owners of environmental and health data to share their information. Allowing the EPHTN to access and analyze health and environmental data helps improve the quality of public health interventions. In addition, the EPHTN is equipped with high-level data analysis and visualization and reporting tools that may be useful for data owners and others who access the network. Data owners retain control of their data on the network. Owners may share data in accordance with a use agreement with the EPHTN to determine conditions regarding the use of their data. For more information about sharing your data please contact the Utah Department of Health Environmental Public Health Tracking Program at (801) 538-6191.

Partnering Agencies

United States Geological Survey

Federal Environmental Protection Agency

Utah Department of Health, Center for Health Data

Utah Department of Health, Office of Vital Records and Statistics

Utah Department of Health, Environmental Epidemiology Program

Utah Population Database

Utah Birth Defects Network

Utah Cancer Registry

Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality

Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Drinking Water

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Utah Health Information Network

Utah Health Data Committee, Office of Health Care Statistics

Indicator Based Information Systems for Public Health (IBIS-PH)

Environmental Public Health Tracking

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PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH