CDC’s National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

The Environmental Public Health Tracking Network is a dynamic system that provides information and data about environmental hazards and potentially related health problems. It presents what is known about environmental hazards, such as air pollution, and where they might exist, where people are exposed to hazards, and how targeted action can protect health, reduce illness, and save lives.

AIR POLLUTION (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) AND HEALTH

Air pollution is a leading environmental threat to human health. Particles in the air such as dust, dirt, soot, and smoke are kinds of air pollution that have been linked with health problems. Some particles in the air are large or dark enough to be seen, like some kinds of smoke and soot. Other particles are so small that you cannot see them. Very small particles that are less than 2.5 micrometers wide (smaller than a grain of sand) are known as fine particulate matter or PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles are small enough to be inhaled deeply into the lungs. Once fine particles are in the lungs, they can affect the heart, blood vessels, and lungs. People exposed to fine particles over a long period of time can have more heart and lung problems than people who are not breathing this kind of air pollution. Being exposed to any kind of particulate matter may lead to increased emergency department visits and hospital stays for breathing and heart problems and other health problems. In Utah:

21/10,000 Age-adjusted Rate of Emergency Department Visits for Asthma - 2011

23/10,000 Age-adjusted Rate of Hospitalizations for Heart Attacks (over 35) - 2011

cdc.gov/ephtracking
CDC’s National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

Tracking Blood Lead Levels

The Utah Environmental Public Health Tracking Program (Utah Tracking Program) tracks blood lead levels in both adults and children. Lead-based paint and lead contaminated dust are the main sources of exposure to lead for U.S. children. Lead-based paints were banned for use in housing in 1978. Houses built before 1978, especially those built before 1950, are likely to contain some lead-based paint. The deterioration of this paint causes a problem when it flakes into the air and on the floor. CDC recommends public health actions be initiated when the level of lead in children’s blood is above 5 micrograms per deciliter (ug/dL). Even low levels of lead in children’s blood have been shown to affect IQ, ability to pay attention, and academic achievement. Anyone, child or adult, could be at risk for lead poisoning depending on where they live, where they go to school, and where they work. Adults exposed to lead are at risk for damage to the nervous system, reproductive system, and kidneys.

Environmental Hazards

Number of homes built before 1950 (as measured in 2000 census): statewide average: 20.2%

Health Effects

Prevalence of children (age 0-5 years) in the state with blood lead levels ≥10 micrograms per deciliter (ug/dL): 1.0% in 2012

Blood lead prevalence of Utah adults age 16 years or older employed in non-agricultural jobs in 2012:

- ≥25 ug/dL – 2.0/per 100,000 workers
- ≥40 ug/dL – 0.7/per 100,000 workers

Raising Awareness About the Dangers of Radon

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that seeps into homes from soil and bedrock. Radon poses a health hazard when it enters homes and accumulates inside. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that people take action to reduce radon levels in their home if their test result measures 4.0 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) or above. Without properly reducing radon levels, the risk of lung cancer increases. The Utah Tracking Program tracks the results of short-term home radon tests. These data are used to raise awareness about the dangers of radon and encourage Utahns to test their homes.

Environmental Hazards

Statewide average radon test result: 5.3 pCi/L

37% of all radon test results in Utah are over the EPA action level of 4.0 pCi/L

epht.health.utah.gov