Environmental Public Health Program

What We Do

Mission

• Hazard and exposure evaluation
• Health assessment
• Health communication and education (Community engagement)
• Reduce or eliminate exposures
Health Assessment

Letter Health Consultations
• Most common form of assessment.
• Addresses a particular concern at a site.
• Often a concern brought to our attention by Dept. of Environmental Conservation.
• In letter form and relatively short.

Health Consultations
• Done for a “certified” site like Superfund sites or from a citizen petition to ATSDR.
• May address multiple concerns in multiple media (e.g. soil, shellfish, air).
• Longer and in a particular format.
• Consultation is reviewed and “cleared” by ATSDR.
Health Assessment Examples

- Salt Chuck Mine
- Klag Bay
- Vapor intrusion sites

Funded through a cooperative agreement with ATSDR. We work together to finalize these consultations.
Alaska Blood Lead Surveillance Program

- Investigate high blood lead levels (BLLs).
- Attempt to identify exposure sources.
- Provide recommendations to prevent exposure.
- Provide education on lead, exposure sources, adverse health effects and exposure prevention.
- No amount of lead in the blood is safe, especially for children under 6 years old.
Lead Health Effects

Acute Exposure

Short exposure to a high lead level can cause:

- Abdominal pain
- Constipation
- Tiredness
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Loss of appetite
- Memory loss
- Pain or tingling in the hands and/or feet
- Weakness

The lack of specificity of these symptoms may cause lead exposure to be overlooked
Lead Health Effects

*Chronic Exposure In Children*

Lead can cause:

- Damage to the brain
- Slow growth and development
- Learning and behavior problems
- Cause hearing and speech problems

- Lower IQ
- Decreased capacity to focus
- Underperformance at school
Lead Exposure Sources

**Occupational**
- Mining
- Construction
- Firing Ranges

**Non-occupational**
- Lead shot and bullets
- Old paint debris (inside and outside)
- Drinking water (old houses)
- Firing Ranges (Adults & children)
- Fishing weights
- Folk remedies
- Mouthing old toys or household objects
Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education

**Purpose:** Ensure that early care and education (ECE) programs are located where chemical hazards have been considered, addressed, and ruled out or mitigated to best protect children’s health.
Choose Safe Places

Focuses on:
• Past uses of site
• Nearby sites (potential for contamination)
• Naturally occurring contamination
• Access to safe drinking water
Brownfields

• Assess future use of a site from environmental health perspective.
• Former Alaska Native Hospital in Anchorage is one example of our brownfields work.
Thanks!

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