

# Taking An Environmental Health History

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# Well Child Visits

- Ask about environmental exposures
- Provide guidance on preventing or abating exposures
- Guide families to resources e.g., as local and national organizations
- Parents' answers guide anticipatory guidance about preventing/abating exposures



# III Children

- important to ask questions about the child's environment in making the differential diagnosis
- Asthma triggers?

# Clinical Settings?

- Well-child clinics
- Pedi subspecialty clinics
- ER
- Health Center
- Prenatal
- Adolescent/school-based clinics



# Risks Vary By Age:

## Prenatal

- **Home renovations**

- Lead
- Paint
- Solvents

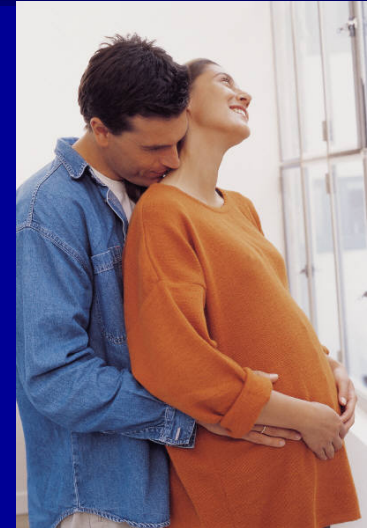
- **Smoking**

- **Occupations/Hobbies**

- Chemical exposure

- **Diet/Water**

- Fish high in Hg
- CCR/Well water testing



# Risks Vary by Age: Birth

- **Breastfeeding-encourage it!**
- **Formula Feeding?**
  - Run water-Pb
  - Test well water
  - Bottled water
  - Type of bottles-avoid polycarbonate/leach plasticizers  
**Preferable: opaque plastic (polyethylene or polypropylene) or tempered glass**
- **Mercury**
  - Glass thermometer
  - Breastfeeding-fish high in Hg



# Risks Vary by Age: 15-18 mo

- **Arsenic Exposure**
  - Seal CCA preserved (pressure treated) wood decking & play structures q. 1-2 yrs
  - Hand washing after play
- **Lawn Chemicals**



# Risks Vary by Age:

## Preschool

- Arts & crafts-nontoxic markers & other low VOC materials. Avoid imported art products (less stringent standards)
- Schools/daycare sites have policies to prevent exposures & promote alternatives to pesticide, toxic cleaning & art products
- Pesticide use in home/pets
- Poisoning
- Lead
- Dietary Hg/PCBs/dioxins: Safer choices-pollock, wild salmon, "chunk light" tuna



# Risks Vary by Age: Teenage Years

- Occupational exposures
- Exposures from hobbies
  - Noise from headphones
  - Toluene/glue model building
  - Pb/indoor firing range
  - Arts/crafts
    - Paint
    - Stained glass making
    - Furniture refinishing



# Risks Vary by Season: Spring & Summer

- Lawn/Garden products
- Lawn services
- Scheduled chemical application



# Risks Vary by Season: Fall & Winter

- IAQ-pesticides, cleaners (bleach/ammonia), solvents (paints/paint strippers)
- Wood Stoves
  - Wood boilers
- Fireplaces
- Gas heat & stoves
- Radon
  - Testing-if unknown or above 4pCi/L avoid basement sleep/play area
  - If high-remediation



# Spiritual & Cultural Considerations: Hg

- **Latin American Voodoo**
  - Santeria –originating in Cuba and Brazil
- **Caribbean**
  - Vodoo
  - Espiritismo – Puerto Rico
- **Indian- Ayurvedic medicine**
- **African**
- **Chinese**



# Spiritual & Cultural Considerations: Hg

- Mixed with water for spiritual cleansing of the home or body
- Burned in candles to bring good luck
- Swallowed or applied to the skin for healing
- Sprinkled around the home, car, or baby's cribs to ward off evil spirits
- Carried in a pouch as a good luck charm



# In the end:

- You don't know until you ask!

