

NORTHERN MANHATTAN CARE COLLABORATIVE NEWSLETTER

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Welcome Our New CARE Collaborative Members

- Museo Del Barrio
- Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell
- Assembly Member Adam Clayton Powell, IV
- Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito
- Studio Museum of Harlem
- Abyssinian Development Corporation
- New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health
- Project Harmony, Inc.
- Harlem Independent Living Center



A New Threat to Public Health "Third-Hand Smoke"

A study published in January's issue of Pediatrics has brought to light the hazards of "third-hand smoke," a term coined by doctors from Mass General Hospital in Boston. Third-hand smoke is used to describe the toxic residues left behind in smoker's hair, clothing, and carpeting. The toxins can transfer to hands and become ingested. The chemicals of concern, all of which cause cancer (carcinogenic), include: hydrogen cyanide, butane, toluene, arsenic, lead and carbon monoxide.

The study, which reported on attitudes towards smoking, found that the majority of both smokers and nonsmokers were aware that second-hand smoke poses a threat to children's health. Conversely, very few were aware of the risks associated with "third-hand smoke."

The scientists are hopeful that widespread knowledge of "third-hand smoke" hazards will enable parents to make smarter decisions regarding their smoking behavior. Dr. Philip Landrigan, a pediatrician who heads the Children's Environmental Health Center at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York stated "The central message here is that simply closing the kitchen door to take a smoke is not protecting the kids from the effects of that smoke... There are carcinogens in this third-hand smoke, and they are a cancer risk for anybody of any age who comes into contact with them."

(Source: The New York Times, January 2, 2009)



East Harlem Partnership Fights to Prevent Diabetes

The East Harlem Partnership for Diabetes Prevention's main goal is to educate East Harlem residents about the risks of pre-diabetes and how to help them prevent and reduce their chances of developing diabetes. Many people in East Harlem have diabetes. You may have a family member, like your parents, siblings, aunts or uncles, or perhaps a friend who is living with diabetes. The road toward preventing diabetes does not have to be difficult; you can make simple changes like eating an orange instead of a cookie or getting off the subway or bus before your stop and walking the rest of the distance. If you have any questions about the EHPDP or about pre-diabetes, please feel free to contact us at 212-659-9552 or at ehpdp@unionsett.org.



Register Now!

On March 30, 2009 Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health (CCCEH), in collaboration with WE ACT for Environmental Justice will hold a one-day conference entitled:

Translating Science to Policy: Protecting Children's Environmental Health

The conference will be held at Alfred Lerner Hall, Columbia University

Please RSVP to Swapna Mehta phone 212-304-7284 or Email: cccehconference@columbia.edu or visit the conference website ccceh.org/conference09.html



CARE
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Does Pollution Cause Obesity?

Can it be that pollution is causing obesity? According to Taisen Iguchi and Yoshinao Katsu, of the Graduate University for Advanced Studies in Japan pollution can lead to obesity. Iguchi and Katsu have identified tributyltin as a potential cause of fatty tissue in animals. Tributyltin, the active ingredient of many products is primarily used as a paint additive on ship and boat hulls, docks, fishnets, and buoys to discourage the growth of marine organisms such as barnacles, bacteria, tubeworms, mussels and algae.

A recent article in Bioscience, described how tributyltin affects the liver, nervous and immune systems in mammals, growth of fat storage cells and regulate whole body metabolism. They found that tributyltin caused the growth of excess fatty tissue in newborn mice exposed to it in utero.

The researchers also noted that the rise in obesity in humans over the past 40 years parallels the increased use of industrial chemicals over the same period. This increase may be attributable to pollutants such as bisphenol A (BPA) and nonylphenol, which have strong biological effects, and that have been shown to stimulate the growth of fat storage cells in mice. (Source: Bioscience, December, 2008, Vol. 58, (11))

Canada Takes Measures to Reduce BPA Exposure

As reported in one of Canada's leading newspapers, concerned Canadians are now satisfied with their government's recent ban on plastic baby bottles containing bisphenol A (BPA). The Globe and Mail reported that a coalition of 22 public health and environmental advocates are demanding a ban on BPA in all food packaging due to the potential health risks to mothers and fetuses. Health Canada, the Canadian federal department responsible for helping to maintain and improve health, has stated that BPA poses potentially harmful effects to pregnant women and fetuses. However more information is needed to understand the risk to fetuses.

BPA adds strength and resilience to containers, and therefore is used in the production of polycarbonate plastic, and the linings of almost all canned foods and beverages, bottles, and the metal lids of glass containers. While many uses may pose no risk to consumers, some scientists worry about the health effects of ingesting low doses of the chemical. Due to the natural acidity of many foods and the effects of the high temperatures used in food sterilization, minute quantities of BPA have been found to leach from the packaging to the food products. These small quantities may have a hazardous effect in humans.

Although most of the BPA research has been conducted on laboratory animals exposed during gestation and shortly beyond, the results show that BPA is an estrogen mimic, and may cause cancer. (Source: The Globe and Mail, December 16, 2008)

Let's Plant Trees!

Wish your block were tree-lined? Have a great location in the neighborhood in mind for a tree? Let us know! Citizens Committee for New York City is partnering with The Million Trees NYC campaign. We'll provide the trees, supplies and training if you and your neighbors, colleagues and friends are willing to provide the volunteer hours needed to plant and care for the trees. If you are interested, please contact Debra Sheldon at 212-989-0909 or dsheldon@citizensnyc.org.