

impact on human health and the environment. Some useful IPM tips include:

- Be neat – keep your home clean by thoroughly wiping spills, avoid leaving pet food out in the open, and remove clutter to help prevent the creation of a desirable environment for common household pests;
- Prevent access – store food in tightly covered jars and avoid leaving food, particularly sweet and greasy food, out in the open;
- Erect blockades – exclude pests with fencing, caulking, and barriers, such as door sweeps, netting, and screens;
- Buy safer pest control products – look for less harmful alternatives to traditional pesticides, such as insecticidal soap; and
- If necessary, spray with care – avoid spraying pesticides when children are present or when food, eating utensils, or toys are nearby.

Look for “Green” Household Products

Most homeowners are surprised to learn how many hazardous products are in their homes. Many common household products, such as cleaners, paints, hobby products, auto maintenance and pool chemicals can contaminate soil, air, and water if used and disposed of improperly. They can also pose both immediate and long term health risks to families. There are many effective products on the market now that are relatively less toxic and polluting. Parents can make or shop for these products with the following ideas in mind:

- Buy or make your own non-toxic alternatives;
- Buy wisely by reading the label and avoiding products with warnings, such as corrosive, flammable, toxic, danger, and poison;
- Avoid ingredients derived from petroleum in favor of plant- or bio-based products;

- Avoid products containing unnecessary fragrances and dyes that can irritate allergies;
- Buy and use only what you need; and
- Store and dispose of household hazardous waste properly.

Join with Others

Working with other parents, who are concerned about the health of the environment and their children, can provide a powerful voice for pollution prevention in a local community. There are many examples of people joining together and making improvements in their children's school environment, improving public parks and play spaces for children, establishing neighborhood tree plantings and gardens, and sharing information on key environmental hazards so that they can take action to eliminate those dangers to children.

Get More Information and Assistance

There are lots of excellent sources of information and assistance on what parents can do to create a healthy planet for their children. Start by contacting NEWMOA for more information, tips, and ideas. They can be reached by calling 617 367-8558 or check out the following website: www.newmoa.org.

This fact sheet provides a partial list of the measures that parents can take to protect children from environmental harm. Contact the resources listed above for more information and ideas.

This brochure was produced by the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association (NEWMOA) and the CTDEP, MEDEP, MADEP, MAOTA, MAEOEA, MATURI, NHDES, NYSDEC, ECOPP, RIDEM, VTDEC, and EPA with financial support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency New England.

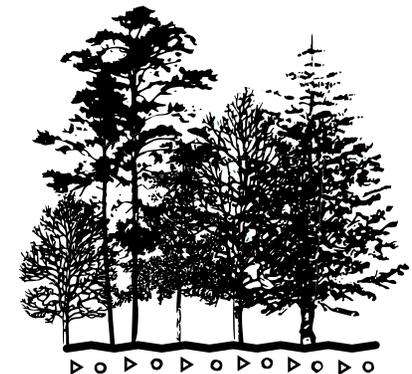


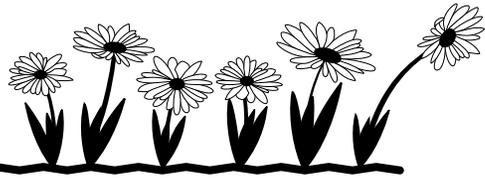
Tips for Parents to Recognize That a “Healthy Planet = Healthy Kids”

Celebrate
Pollution Prevention Week 2000

September 18 – 24, 2000

The Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association (NEWMOA) invites you to join in their efforts to recognize Pollution Prevention Week 2000 by taking some steps to create a healthier planet for our children's health. This brochure provides some ideas that you can use to prevent pollution and protect school-age kids. For more extensive prevention suggestions, contact the agencies listed at the end of this brochure.





Action to Prevent Asthma

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology reports that more than 4.8 million children under the age of 18 have asthma. And the numbers are growing... You can take some steps to lower your child's risk of environmentally-related asthma. Smog and particulate pollutants have been linked to increases in emergency room visits by asthma victims and others with lung problems. These pollutants come from transportation, energy production, and other sources. To help with reducing these pollutants, parents can:

- Takes steps to drive less in individual vehicles;
- Use public transportation and encourage public transportation agencies to shift their vehicles to cleaner fuels, including natural gas and electricity, where appropriate;
- Purchase reduced-emissions products, such as low polluting paints, cleaning supplies, and personal care products; and
- Conserve energy whenever possible.



Reduce Mercury in the Environment

Throughout the Northeast states have issued fresh water fish advisories to warn pregnant mothers and young children about consuming unsafe amounts of the fish in lakes, rivers, and ponds because of concern about the mercury content of the fish. Mercury can have potential neurotoxic and other health effects, particularly in children. The major sources of mercury that are related to human activity in the region are burning waste and producing electricity, particularly at coal-fired plants. Many consumer products that are discarded as waste contain

1

mercury, including mercury fever thermometers, non-electrical thermostats, switches inside some products (i.e., certain appliances and cars), and fluorescent and high intensity discharge light bulbs. When these products are discarded in the trash, they are often incinerated, which can release mercury to the air; when it rains this mercury can be deposited in lakes, rivers, and ponds.

Parents can:

- Become educated about your state's fresh water fish advisory;
- Purchase non-mercury alternative products, where feasible; and
- Properly recycle or dispose of used mercury-containing products – household hazardous waste collections are one acceptable method, where they are available.



Prevent Lead Exposure

Lead is a very common heavy metal that can cause damage to the nerves, kidneys, brain, blood, and reproductive and immunologic systems. Children are particularly susceptible to the damaging effects of lead. The leading sources of environmental lead related to human activities are lead smelters, incineration of lead batteries, burning lead-contaminated waste oil, and lead-containing paint and soil.

- Avoid purchasing lead-containing devices and equipment, wherever feasible;
- Make sure that used lead acid batteries, such as car batteries, are managed properly and recycled and not sent to waste incinerators; and
- If you suspect that your home or school contains lead paint, contact a reputable contractor to test your home and school and the surrounding soil to determine if lead is present, and work with them to implement a safe method for lead removal or containment.

2

Reduce Household Garbage and the Toxics It Contains



Households are generating more trash than ever before. Some of this trash is now recycled in many places, but there is still an ongoing solid waste problem. For example, 20 percent of the food we buy and prepare gets thrown out. States would like to avoid having to site new landfills or incinerators to handle the growing amount of garbage. There are many important steps that parents can take to reduce waste, mainly by thinking ahead and being a little creative. Here are some ideas:

- Pack a no- or low-waste lunch for your child by using reusable lunch boxes, bags, and food containers; and avoiding disposable juice boxes;
- Use less paper – make sure to utilize both sides of the paper or go “paper-less” by sending and receiving more information electronically;
- Eliminate unwanted junk mail by contacting the Mail Preference Service, PO Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735 and asking them to remove your name from direct mail lists;
- Use household hazardous waste facilities to dispose of household hazardous products, where available; and
- Try tracking how much food gets thrown out and figure out ways to reduce this waste; buy and prepare only as much food as your family can eat.



Minimize Use of Pesticides

Pesticides are toxic and children should have as little exposure to these chemicals as possible. There is a relatively new pest control program, called integrated pest management or IPM, that provides a systematic approach to managing pests. IPM focuses on long term pest prevention or suppression with minimal

3