

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Environmental health encompasses the extrinsic physical, chemical, and biological factors contributing to a person's health.

HIGH RISK GROUPS



RURAL/REMOTE, including Aboriginal populations - more likely affected by environmental factors, such as air or water pollution and climate change

CHILDREN - young children under age 5 are most at risk of illness and death due to environmental hazards (e.g. pneumonia, diarrheal diseases)

ELDERLY - older adults aged 50 and up are more likely affected by largely non-communicable diseases due to environmental or occupational exposures (e.g. respiratory illness)

GENERAL



Is there anything that you are exposed to at home, school or work that reduces your quality of life? (E.g. air or noise pollution; mould; unsafe water; toxic hazards)

Do you ever have trouble breathing outside? What triggers this?

How often and how long are you exposed to the sun? With/without sunscreen?

HOUSING



Health risks include respiratory infections (dampness - moulds, bacteria), falls/injuries (esp. for elderly), indoor smoke, disease vectors (insects, rodents), allergens (scents, pets), and toxins (asbestos, lead paint).

Where do you live, in what type of housing, and in what kind of neighbourhood?

How many people live in your household? Do any of them share medical conditions? (e.g. allergies, asthma, skin problems)

Do you have access to a stable source of heating and electricity?

Do you use an indoor or outdoor stove or fireplace? If so, with what kind of fuel?

Does your home have a carbon monoxide detector?

EMPLOYMENT



Health risks include hearing loss, back pain, poisoning, COPD and other respiratory illnesses, and carcinogen exposures. Stress is a significant occupational hazard, so do screen for mental health status.

What is/was your occupation? Are there any hazards that you are aware of in your current or past workplace? (e.g. dust, chemicals, waste, radiation, loud noise, fumes, heavy lifting, pesticides, asbestos, biological agents, etc.)

Do you feel that your health, including your mental health, is aggravated by your work?

Is personal protective equipment worn at your workplace? If so, how often and what kind?



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TRANSPORT



Health risks include traffic injuries, air pollution (exhaust), and physical activity levels. Note that use of public transit or active transport (walking, cycling) not only improves individual health through activity, but also impacts air quality, the environment and overall population health by reducing emissions, for example.

How do you typically get around or commute to work/school?

Do you ever have problems getting to work, or encounter hazards which affect your health?

NUTRITION & WATER



Health risks include foodborne and waterborne diseases, malnutrition, eating disorders, overweight/obesity and related chronic diseases.

Where do you normally obtain food and how is it prepared (at home/eating out)?

Do you have access to safe, nutritious food? If not, why not (e.g. cost, availability, quality)? How do you store your food and does it often go bad?

Do you have access to adequate clean water? How do you access water for various uses? E.g. drinking (filtered or boiled?), washing produce, bathing, etc.

RESOURCES

Health Canada - Environmental & Workplace Health
hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/index-eng.php

Health Canada - First Nations & Inuit Health - Environmental Health
hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/promotion/public-publique/home-maison/index-eng.php

Healthy Canadians - Health and the Environment
healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-living-vie-saine/environment-environnement/index-eng.php



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