

World Environmental Health Day is 26 September -- special focus on children

By Ruth Etzel, MD

Children's exposure to pollutants in the air, water, food and soil is a major contributor to increased morbidity and mortality. World Environmental Health Day, which occurs on 26 September, will have a special focus on children. See:

[http://www.ifeh.org/wehd/2015/World Environmental Health Day 2015.pdf](http://www.ifeh.org/wehd/2015/World_Environmental_Health_Day_2015.pdf)

The World Health Organization estimates that approximately one third of the disease burden in developing countries is attributed to modifiable environmental factors, including indoor and outdoor air pollution, unsafe water, radiation, inadequate sanitation, and hygiene. This is 2 to 3 times higher than the attributable portion in the most developed countries.

In thinking about these environmental factors, it is important to note that, unlike factors that can't be changed, such as a child's genetic make-up, environmental exposures are preventable. However, such exposures are often beyond an individual's control. For this reason, limiting or preventing environmental exposures must be a collective responsibility. Children are especially dependent upon the adults in their lives and in society to take on this responsibility on their behalf. The IPA is working towards healthier environments for children through the technical advisory group on environmental health. For more information, please see: <http://www.ipa-world.org/environmental-health.php>