

## 16.2: Environmental Health

### Environmental Health

Environmental health is a branch of public health. It focuses on the relationships between people and their environment, and promotes human health and well-being. Further, it fosters healthy and safe communities and is a key part of any comprehensive public health system. The field works to advance policies and programs to reduce chemical and other environmental exposures in air, water, soil, and food to protect people and provide communities with an healthier environments.

### Toxicology vs. Environmental Health

The two fields are closely connected, with a large intersection.

The terminology is loose. For example, is environmental health about the health of the environment and/or the effect of the environment on health?

### Scope of Work and Study

Environmental health specialists identify and evaluate environmental hazards and their sources. They also limit exposures to physical, chemical, and biological agents in air, water, soil, food, and other environmental media or settings that may adversely affect human health ([Source](#)).



Figure 16.2.1 Environmental health saves lives, saves money, and protects your future (Image Source: National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), © 2016. [Original image](#))

## National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH)

The CDC National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) plans, directs, and coordinates a program to protect the American people from environmental hazards. The NCEH seeks to prevent premature death, avoidable illness, and disability caused by non-infectious, non-occupational environmental and related factors. One focus is on safeguarding the health of venerable populations, such as children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, from certain environmental hazards.

**Learn more** about environmental health

- U.S. CDC National Center for Environmental Health - <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/>
- American Public Health Association (APHA): "Environmental Health" - <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/environmental-health>
- National Environmental Health Association (NEHA): "Definitions of Environmental Health" - <https://www.neha.org/about-neha/definitions-environmental-health>

### Knowledge Check

#### 1) Which of the following are important environmental health issues?

- a) Radon in air
- b) Lead contamination in drinking water
- c) Foodborne illness from contaminated food
- d) All of these are important for human health

#### Answer

All of these are important for human health

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