

Module 8: A Drive Through the Community

Topic 2 Content: Environmental Health

Environmental Health



Environmental health consists of preventing or controlling disease, injury, and disability related to the interactions between people and their environment.

Your diet and your lifestyle obviously have significant impacts on your health. Your environment also influences your health in various ways. For example, if the water in your community is contaminated with a hazardous substance, it could cause serious health issues. Environmental health consists of preventing or controlling disease, injury, and disability related to the interactions between people and their environment.

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Environmental Risk Factors

Chronic diseases cause 80% of deaths in the U.S. and 2/3 of deaths globally.

1 in every 5 children suffer from allergies or chronic respiratory diseases.

Maintaining a healthy environment is important to increasing quality of life and years of a healthy life.



Chronic diseases include cancer, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and stroke. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), chronic diseases cause eighty percent of deaths in the United States and two-thirds of deaths around the world. In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO) contends that one in every five children suffer from allergies or chronic respiratory diseases. Maintaining a healthy environment is important to increasing quality of life and years of a healthy life. Nearly twenty-five percent of all deaths and disease can be attributed to environmental factors. Environmental factors include:

- exposure to hazardous substances in the air, water, soil, and food;
- natural and technological disasters;
- physical hazards; and
- nutritional deficiencies.

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Environmental Health Legislation

Environmental health must address societal and environmental factors.

Chronic diseases account for most of the healthcare costs in the U.S.

New legislation provides easier access to health screenings, as well as earlier interventions for chronic diseases.



Poor environmental quality has its greatest impact on people whose health is already at risk. Therefore, environmental health must address the societal and environmental factors that increase the likelihood of exposure and disease.

In part because chronic diseases account for most of the healthcare costs in the United States, new legislation exists to provide easier access to health screenings, as well as earlier interventions for chronic diseases. However, it is also important to have environmental regulations that protect Americans from chronic diseases. For example, pollution increases the chance of contracting cancer and respiratory diseases. In addition, cities need to cultivate environments that enhance health and decrease chronic diseases by offering easier and safer ways to walk or bicycle around the community. Furthermore, by implementing smoke-free air laws at work and in restaurants and bars, Americans are better protected from secondhand smoke.

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Environmental Health Professionals

Environmental health professionals work with a wide range of experts from other fields.

These experts may be chemists, geologists, biologists, meteorologists, physicists, physicians, engineers, government officials, or members of the media.

People who work in public health focus on controlling diseases and outbreaks.



In order to better address societal and environmental concerns, environmental health professionals work with a wide range of experts from other fields. These experts may be chemists, geologists, biologists, meteorologists, physicists, physicians, engineers, government officials, or members of the media. While health care providers concentrate on providing care, people who work in public health focus on controlling diseases and outbreaks. The job is demanding and requires a commitment to public welfare; however, the work is interesting and helps make the world a better place.