

# Pollution in People: Michigan - Overview

Michigan participated in a seven-state biomonitoring project coordinated by the Commonwealth Biomonitoring Resource Center. In the current "Is It In Us? - Toxic Trespass, Regulatory Failure & Opportunities for Action" project, thirty-five people, five from each of seven states, were tested for three groups of common industrial chemicals that are under increasing scrutiny for their contributions to a growing epidemic of diseases and disorders.

Blood and urine samples from each participant were tested for: phthalates, which are plasticizers commonly used in cosmetics and plastics; polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), which are used as flame retardants in furniture, mattresses, and electronics; and bisphenol A, a chemical used in some plastic water bottles and as a liner in tin cans. Please see the accompanying document for more information on these chemicals and their health effects.

In Michigan, "Is It In Us?" was coordinated by the Michigan Network for Children's Environmental Health, a coalition of health professional, health-affected, environmental organizations, and others dedicated to a safe and less toxic world for Michigan's children. The Network seeks to protect Michigan's children from adverse impacts caused by exposure to widespread hazardous chemicals.

The purpose of "Is It In Us?" is to raise awareness about the presence of industrial chemicals in each of us. The results will help demonstrate the need for new policies in Michigan to reduce our exposures to these chemicals.

The goals of the project include:

- 1) educating the public, policy makers, and opinion-leaders about the presence of toxic chemicals in our bodies; and
- 2) supporting statewide and national advocacy efforts to replace toxic chemicals with safer alternatives.

We all have industrial chemicals stored in or passing through our bodies – the result of over five decades of intensive chemical use in industrialized nations. Most chemical exposures occur without our knowledge from low-level contamination in our food, air, water and the



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things we touch. Increasingly, biomonitoring is being conducted by national and state agencies and by public interest organizations to assess trends in chemical use and exposure, to identify vulnerable populations and populations exposed to chemicals of concern, to assess the effectiveness of current chemical regulations, and to demonstrate the need for chemical policy reform.

Biomonitoring takes a "snapshot" of chemical exposures that could cause health problems. Although individual biomonitoring data in general is not predictive for individual health outcomes, biomonitoring can tell us what environmental chemicals are present in a person's body at a particular moment in time. Some of these chemicals pass through the body quickly and may be eliminated within a few hours' time. Others may be persistent and may remain in the body for decades.

For more information, please visit:

**The Commonwealth Biomonitoring Resource Center**  
<http://www.commonweal.org/programs/brc/index.html>

**Pollution in People (Washington State)**  
<http://www.pollutioninpeople.org/>

**Alliance for a Clean & Healthy Maine**  
<http://www.cleanandhealthyme.org/>

**The California Body Burden Campaign**  
<http://www.calbbc.org/site/pp.asp?c=9eIELMMAG&b=65900>

**Coming Clean's Body Burden Project**  
<http://www.chemicalbodyburden.org/>

**Body Burden: The Pollution in Newborns**  
<http://www.ewg.org/reports/bodyburden2/execsumm.php>

**The Pollution Within**  
<http://www3.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0610/feature4/index.html>

**National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/exposurereport/>