

# Environment

(March 2023)

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## Rationale

Environmental issues are important in medical practice because exposures may be causally linked to a patient's clinical presentation and the health of the exposed population. A physician is expected to work with regulatory agencies and allied health professionals (e.g., occupational hygienists), where appropriate, to help implement the necessary interventions to prevent future illness. Physician involvement is important in the promotion of global environmental health.

## Key Objectives

- Recognize the implications of environmental hazards at both the individual and population level
- Respond to patient concerns through appropriate information gathering and treatment
- Work collaboratively with local, provincial, and national agencies/governments as appropriate to address the concerns at a population level
- Communicate with patients, communities, and employers, where appropriate, concerning environmental risk assessment

## Enabling Objectives

- Identify common environmental hazards and be able to classify them into the appropriate category of chemical, biological, physical, and radiation
- Identify the common hazards that are found in air, water, soil, and food
- Describe the steps in an environmental risk assessment and be able to critically review a simple risk assessment for a community
- Conduct a focused clinical assessment of exposed persons to determine the causal linkage between exposure and the clinical condition

- Be aware of local, regional, provincial, and national regulatory agencies that can assist in the investigation of environmental concerns
- Describe simple interventions that will be effective in reducing environmental exposures and risk of disease (e.g., sunscreen for sunburns, bug spray for prevention of West Nile virus infection)
- Communicate simple environmental risk assessment information to both patients and the community