

## MONITOR CHANGES IN YOUR HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

**Keep a health diary.** Write down changes in your health and changes you notice in your water or air. **Share this information with your health care provider.**

**Remember that children, senior citizens or people with chronic health conditions are more sensitive to contamination.** Pay special attention to changes in their health.

**Check the electrical conductivity of your water.** This can tell you if your water quality changes, and if there are unknown substances in your water. The electrical conductivity of water estimates the total amount of solids dissolved in the water. These solids may include harmful chemicals. EHP offers a free conductivity monitor, the CATTfish, to individuals on well or spring water.\*

**Monitor particulate matter (PM) in the air.** EHP offers a free air monitor, the Speck, to help you identify times when PM concentrations are high within or outside your home, and other times when it is not.\*

**Find healthy ways to cope** with the changes in your environment. EHP offers a free program, *Take Steps to Health*, to help you improve your health and manage some of life's stressors. For more information on this program and other healthy ways to cope, go to our website.

**Contact EHP** for environmental and public health resources.

\*The Speck and CATTfish monitors cannot identify specific chemicals in your air or water. They warn you of changes that may show a need for extra testing.

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## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

If your concerns are related to environmental exposures caused by fracking, you will need to explore this issue with your health care provider. Information about related health concerns is continuing to emerge.

**Let your health care provider know all of the potential hazards that are near where you live, work or where your children attend school,** for example: well pads, water impoundments, compressor stations and processing plants.

**Tell your health care provider about the sources of pollution you are concerned about and why you think this is causing your problems.**

**Make sure your health care provider knows if you have well or city water** and if you use bottled water or a water buffalo for drinking, cooking, and bathing.

**Know what type of systems you use to heat and cool your home** and learn whether you can filter your air through those systems.

**If you would like to be tested for toxic chemicals, know that it is not always possible.** Some chemicals combine with others so they cannot be tested; others last only a very short time in the body so if tests are not done right away they could be inaccurate. **What your health care provider can do is order routine laboratory tests to see if your body is responding to a chemical exposure.**

**EHP can help you determine your exposure and how to protect your health. Contact us!**

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## Protecting Your Health from Unconventional Oil and Gas Development (UOGD or "Fracking")

This pamphlet is to help you limit your exposure to air and water contamination. If you know that contamination exists, report this to the proper authorities. EHP can help you locate contact information.

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If you live in close proximity to unconventional oil and gas development (UOGD or “fracking”), or suspect you are being exposed to UOGD contaminants:

## LIMIT CONTAMINATION IN YOUR AIR

Clean your house often, especially areas where your children play.

- Use a vacuum that can fit a high-efficiency particulate arrestance (HEPA) filter.
- Do not sweep with a broom because it will stir up contaminants that have landed in your home. Use a damp cloth or HEPA vacuum instead.
- Use a stand-alone air filter in your home to clear particulate matter (PM) from indoor air. Air filters will remove some PM and specific harmful chemicals from the air. EHP recommends the Austin Air Health Mate because of the quality of the product and associated costs.
- Take off your shoes and wipe off pets’ paws and fur before going inside. This will help to prevent carrying contamination from outside into your home.

Vent the air if you use well or spring water to help reduce indoor exposures to volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that could be in your water.

### TERMS TO REMEMBER:

**Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)** are organic compounds that easily become vapors or gases. Many VOCs are also hazardous air pollutants like benzene.

**Particulate Matter (PM):** potentially dangerous mixture of small particles and liquid droplets found in the air.

- If you have a stove fan that vents outside, always use it while cooking.
- Open windows or run an exhaust fan in the bathroom, kitchen and laundry room.

EHP has documented that most exposures occur late in the evening to early morning. Let fresh air in your home when it is breezy outside, usually in the middle of the day.

Keep your windows closed at times when wind carries PM from an industrial source towards your home.

Consider using a Speck air quality monitor, provided by EHP for free, that measures PM in your air. Contact EHP for more information.



## LIMIT CONTAMINATION IN YOUR WATER

Do not rely on one-time water tests to tell you if your water is safe to drink and use.

- One-time water tests conducted by labs can be expensive and will only give you a “snapshot” of your water quality. Remember that accidents and contamination can happen at any time.
- Consider using a CATTfish water quality monitor, provided by EHP for free, that lets you know when there are changes in your water. Contact EHP for more information.



If you think your spring or well water may be contaminated:

- Avoid using it and consider using bottled water for drinking, cooking and especially making drinks like baby formula.
- Consider using an alternative source of water when showering as VOCs can become airborne when water sprays from a showerhead.

If you must drink or cook with your spring or well water, leave it *uncovered* in a pitcher or bottle overnight before using it.

- By leaving containers *uncovered*, VOCs will evaporate into the air. If possible, vent the air.
- If you must bathe or shower at home, vent your bathroom to the greatest extent possible.

Stop drinking your water if you or someone in your family has stomach pain or discomfort, muscle pains or other unusual symptoms.

If your water burns your skin or causes a rash, take showers and baths somewhere else. Go see your health care provider and call our office to see our family nurse practitioner.