

Environmental Exposure History

Do an exposure history to:

- Identify current or past exposures
- Reduce or eliminate current exposures
- Reduce adverse health effects

I - Investigate Potential Exposures

P - Present Work

R - Residence

E - Environmental Concerns

P - Past Work

A - Activities

R - Referrals and Resources

E - Educate

Taking an Exposure History: Questions to Consider

I - Investigate Potential Exposures

Investigate potential exposures by asking:
n Have you ever felt sick after coming in contact with a chemical, pesticide or other substance?
n Do you have any symptoms that improve when you are away from your home or work?

P - Present Work

At your **present work**: n Are you exposed to solvents, dusts, fumes, radiation, loud noise, pesticides or other chemicals? n Do you know where to find Material Data Safety Sheets on chemicals that you work with? n Do you wear personal protective equipment? n Are work clothes worn home? n Do co-workers have similar health problems?

R - Residence

n When was your **residence** built? n What type of heating do you have? n Have you recently remodeled your home? n What chemicals are stored on your property? n Where does your drinking water come from?

E - Environmental Concerns

n Are there **environmental concerns** in your neighborhood (i.e., air, water, soil)? n What types of industries or farms are near your home? n Do you live near a hazardous waste site or landfill?

P - Past Work

n What are your **past work** experiences? n What is the longest job held? n Have you ever been in the military, worked on a farm, or done volunteer or seasonal work?

A - Activities

n What **activities** and hobbies do you and your family engage in? n Do you burn, solder, or melt any products? n Do you garden, fish or hunt? n Do you eat what you catch or grow? n Do you use pesticides? n Do you engage in any alternative healing or cultural practices?

R - Referrals and Resources

Use these key **referrals and resources**:

- n Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry www.atsdr.cdc.gov
- n Association of Occupational & Environmental Clinics www.aoc.org
- n Environmental Protection Agency www.epa.gov
- n Material Safety Data Sheets www.hazard.com/msds
- n Occupational Safety & Health Administration www.osha.gov
- n Local Health Department, Environmental Agency, Poison Control Center

E - Educate (A Checklist)

n Are materials available to **educate** the patient? n Are alternatives available to minimize the risk of exposure? n Have prevention strategies been discussed? n What is the plan for follow-up?

For more information contact ATSDR at 1-888-42-ATSDR (1-888-422-8737), or visit ATSDR's web site at www.atsdr.cdc.gov