

# CONNECTICUT

*Keeping Track, Promoting Health*



For decades, the United States has faced a fundamental gap in understanding how environmental contaminants affect people's health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working to close this gap by improving surveillance through the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Network). The Tracking Network is a dynamic Web-based tool that, for the first time, provides health and environment data in one easy to find location.

Policy makers and public health officials can use the Tracking Network to make critical decisions about where to target environmental public health resources and interventions. Health practitioners and researchers can use the Tracking Network to learn more about health conditions related to the environment, and improve treatment plans. Anyone can use the Tracking Network to find out how the environment may be affecting them, their family's or community's health.

The building blocks of the national network are state and local health departments around the country that are funded to build local tracking systems. These systems supply data to the National Tracking Network and address local environmental public health concerns. The tracking programs use their networks every day to improve the health of their communities.

*"CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network is the most important accomplishment of the past decade."*

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## Why Tracking Matters in Connecticut

Connecticut's environmental public health problems are diverse because of its urban centers with older housing, an economy based on a variety of industries, and geography that ranges from seashores to mountains. The state is located between two major population centers, Boston and New York City, which also affects the health and environment of its residents. These factors and others contribute to health issues like asthma, cancer, mercury poisoning, and occupational illnesses.

Connecticut has been part of CDC's Tracking Program since 2002. In 2006, Connecticut began developing a state tracking network. The Connecticut Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Connecticut Tracking Network) is a Web-based tool that displays environmental health data collected by different programs across the state department of public health. Since its launch in 2010, users can view data about several environmental and health concerns in the state.



## TRACKING IN ACTION

	The Problem	Tracking in Action	Improved Public Health
<p><b>Tracking the relationship between bladder cancer and environmental contamination</b></p>	<p>An industrial town in southeast Connecticut reported increased numbers of cancer cases among residents. This led to an extensive environmental study of a former manufacturing site in the town. The study looked at the relationships among lead, asbestos, and polychlorinated biphenyl contamination and a possible increase in cancer cases.</p>	<p>The Connecticut Tracking Program assisted with a follow-up study to the original investigation. The follow-up study looked at bladder cancer trends in the town. The tracking program guided the study design and analyzed the data. The follow-up study found that the trend of increased male bladder cancer ended in 1989. It also showed elevated bladder cancer rates for males and females from 1991 to 1996. These increases were small, but still important.</p>	<p>The study results not only benefit the residents of the specific town but also provide all Connecticut residents with a better understanding of the relationship between the environment and health.</p>
<p><b>Improving evaluation of asthma programs</b></p>	<p>Asthma is an ongoing concern for many Connecticut residents, especially those living in urban areas. Tracking the rates of stays in the hospital because of asthma is key to assessing the success of public health interventions.</p>	<p>The Connecticut Tracking Program developed a part of the state tracking network just for asthma. This section includes data from the state asthma program and from hospitals across the state. Users can view real-time rates for asthma-related hospital stays by ethnicity, gender, race, and county.</p>	<p>Thanks to the Connecticut Tracking Program, complete, user-friendly asthma data for the state are available in one place for the first time. Other health department programs in Connecticut now have access to asthma data that can help them more readily evaluate their asthma prevention and control activities in less time.</p>