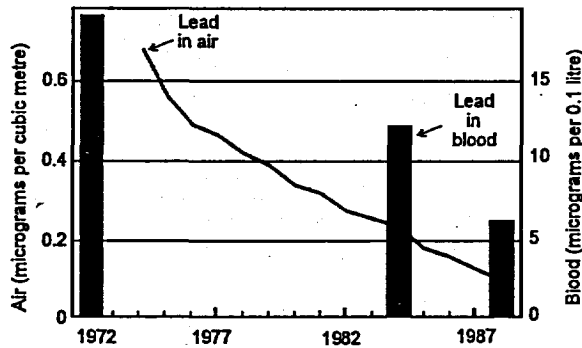


Lead in the Atmosphere and in Children's Blood



Source: Health Canada

Canada has virtually eliminated some environmental impacts on health . . .

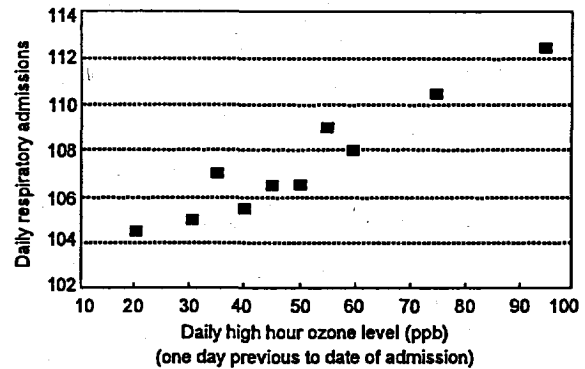
There is rising scientific and public awareness that certain flora and fauna are susceptible to the effects of minute amounts of pollutants and therefore may be early warning indicators for potential human health impacts. Exposure to endocrine disruptors, such as some highly chlorinated persistent organic compounds, is linked to reproductive impacts in animal populations. This has alerted Canadian health and environment officials to the need to monitor human populations for health outcomes and to consider introducing appropriate risk reduction measures.

Canada has been active in promoting domestic and global solutions to environmental and health problems. The levels of many pollutants have decreased dramatically over the past two to three decades, and the risk to human health has declined substantially. Concentrations of PCBs have fallen significantly in recent years, with levels in some species of Great Lakes fish about ten times lower than they were in the 1960s. PCBs have declined sharply in human breast milk in southern Canada since 1982.

As Agenda 21 notes, "education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment

Actual Respiratory Admissions in Ontario

(each point represents 10% of hospital-days of observation)



Source: Health Canada

. . . but others still exist.

and development issues". Canada has invested heavily in education, including the post-secondary level. As a result, it has one of the best-educated populations in the world. Young people are staying in school longer largely because the economic value of education is becoming more pronounced. Moreover, we see a trend toward lifelong learning. However, skills are not distributed equally throughout the Canadian public. For example, although 20 percent of Canadians aged sixteen and older are at the highest levels of a range of literacy scales, 22 percent have very limited literacy skills and an additional 26 percent have some difficulty reading and writing.

Social Capital

Social capital reflects an understanding that people who get to know one another through social networks and civic institutions build a form of trust that allows them to see beyond immediate individual interests. It encourages economic strength because people can take actions, such as investments or wise resource use decisions, that may pay off only over time. It encourages social cohesion and enables people to work together for common goals.