Hello Again!

As the COVID pandemic continues to affect our community and country, we hope you and your loved ones are remaining healthy. Our study has made some changes to keep participants and staff safe. These include:

- In-person biospecimen collection has been paused. Mailed specimen collection began in October.
- Educational workshops and community engagement efforts are available virtually! Check out our website!

University at Buffalo
Environmental Health Study for Western New York

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Not a study participant yet? There's still time! Just go to our website to learn more about the project and how to participate. Questions? Give us a call!

MEET THE TEAM

Dr. Jim Olson, PhD., UB Distinguished Professor, is Professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. He is Professor of Epidemiology and Environmental Health and Director of the Environmental Health Division in the School of Public Health and Health Professions. Dr. Olson's areas of expertise include assessing health risks of exposure to environmental toxicants including organophosphate pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, and polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs- flame retardants). He is trying to understand how toxicants are metabolized in the body and identify how individual genetic differences in enzymes that break down toxicants play a role in susceptibility. This will help us to understand the health risks in people who are exposed to everyday low levels of toxicants as well as higher occupational levels of toxicants.

In his work with the Environmental Health Study, Dr. Olson oversees the analysis of urine samples collected from study participants to assess current exposure to air pollutants such as benzene and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Little is known about the health effects of low-level exposure to these chemicals. Combining knowledge of current exposures with past exposure history can help inform community-specific ways to reduce exposure and improve health.

NEW TEAM MEMBERS!

We're happy to welcome four new staff to the study team:

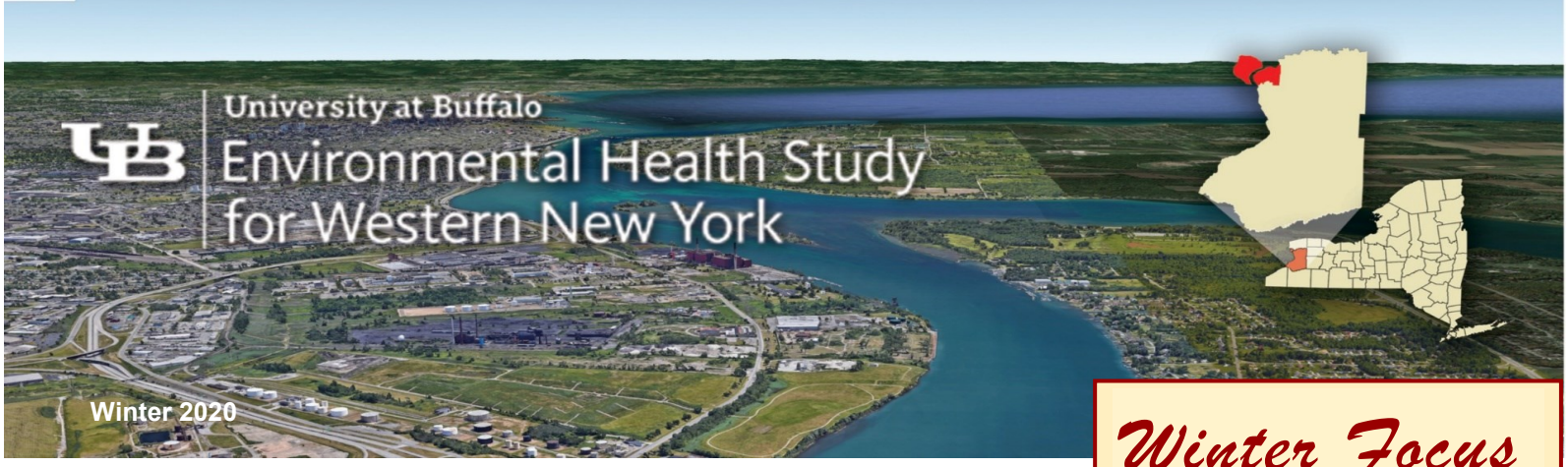
- Alexandra Bentham
- Jessica Leone
- Tammy Milillo
- Cindy Warthling.

Workshop Videos:

Please visit ehs.study.edu!

New topics on-line:

- Pesticides: Health and the Environment
- Pesticides: Safer Lawn and Garden Care
- Nutrition and Health
- Nutrition and the Environment
- Exercise and Health



BIOSPECIMEN COLLECTION

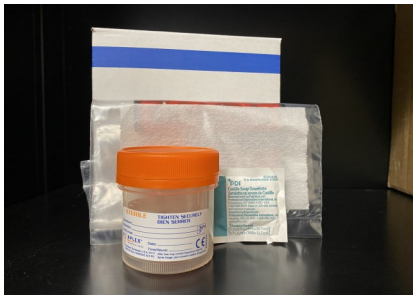
Since collection began in 2019, nearly 800 people have donated blood and urine samples.

In-person biospecimen collection was paused during the pandemic. Blood sample donation is still paused. Moving forward, urine and saliva collection kits will be mailed to participants.

If you would like to be mailed a kit to donate samples please call our research team at (716) 829-5625. Our staff will instruct you how to complete the home sample process. It should take less than 5 minutes.

If you choose to donate, we will mail you consent and compensation forms that you must sign and return. Once these forms are received, we will call you to confirm your shipping address and notify you when you should receive your home sample kit.

How do I provide my samples from home?
You will receive a box with a questionnaire, urine cup, alcohol swabs and saliva collection tube as well as instructions and packaging materials. Instructions include how to collect samples and properly package them to ship back to us. A box with prepaid postage will be provided.



COVID SURVEY UPDATE

Participants with e-mails were invited to take part in a survey about the pandemic's impact on the community. Thank you to those of you who participated! So far, we received over 1,200 surveys back.

CHILDREN'S STUDY

In early October, survey packets were mailed to participants who expressed interest in having their children participate in the Children's Study. The study, led by Dr. Lina Mu, aims to understand the health impacts from exposure to chemicals in air pollution both before and after birth. Children are especially vulnerable to the health effects of pollutants. If you are interested in having your child participate, please contact the study team at (716) 829-5625 or sphhp-ehstudy@buffalo.edu.

COMING SOON!

FOLLOW UP SURVEY

Your continued involvement in the study is very important! If your contact information has changed or you would like to add an e-mail address, please call or e-mail us so we can update your information!

Winter Focus

Winter can be a invigorating season even though the days are short and the air is cold. With the coronavirus pandemic still affecting our community, it's more important than ever to find ways to reduce stress as best you can and find ways that, for you, give you a sense of wellbeing and comfort. Here are some ideas:

Gratitude: Every morning, find at least one thing or person to be grateful for. It'll help start your day in a positive way.

Boots: Get outside and take a walk even if it's for 10 minutes. If you need motivation, give yourself a reason to be outside: count the number of birds you see or take your camera and create a photo journal of your walk.

Expectations: Especially now, with the coronavirus pandemic impacting our lives in many ways, recognize you may feel distracted and have less motivation. Give yourself some kindness and compassion and do the best you can.

Healthy Food: Give your body all the nutritious food it needs to keep you healthy! For a wealth of healthy eating information visit oldwayspt.org and wholegrainscouncil.org

For more Mental Health tips and resources, visit https://www2.erie.gov/health/covid-19-information-mental-health

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