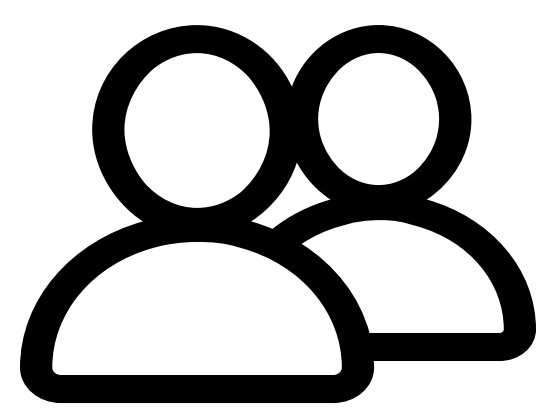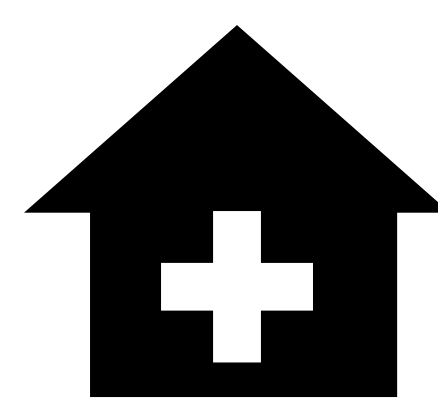# Assessing Exposure, Evaluating Health

How do we know what we are exposed to, and if it might be harmful?

A public health assessment and a health study are two strategies that use different data to answer different questions.

Public Health Assessment

This tool identifies potential health risks from environmental exposures.

Health Study

This tool looks at current patterns of health and disease in a community.

Do chemicals in our environment have potential to harm us?

How much pollution is in our environment?

What health effects are being seen?

Can chemicals in the environment get into our bodies?

What are we being exposed to? (blood/urine sampling)
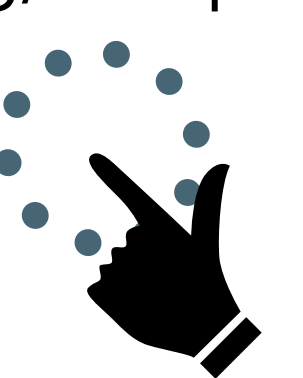
Public Health Assessment
- Uses existing environmental data
- Helps prevent future harmful health effects (illness, etc.)
- Predicts community health risk
- Cannot link exposure directly to health effects
- Existing data may be limited

Health Study
- Provides individual data
- For a population, links exposures to harmful health effects
- Identifies community risk for health concerns
- Requires waiting until people are sick
- Many people needed to identify increased disease rates

Summary

www.healthoregon.org/ehap

Public health assessments can predict risks to people's health. A health, or exposure, study can be done once people are already sick, with the same disease.

Available Data to use for Public Health Assessments and Health studies

Regulatory agencies collect many types of data. This data can be used to assess what people might be exposed to, and if that could impact their health.

Environmental Data — Researchers and agencies often sample the soil, water and air around our communities.

Estimated Exposure Data — Using environmental data, researchers and agencies can estimate which chemicals, and how much, people might be exposed to.

Human Risk Data — If researchers know what people might be exposed to, they can estimate how that could impact their health.

Personal Sampling Data — Samples (blood, urine, wearable sampling devices) determine what people in the study are exposed to, in comparison to others.

	Public Health Assessment	Health Study
Environmental Data	✓	✓
Estimated Exposure Data	✓	✓
Human Risk Data	✓	
Personal Sampling Data		✓
Who does the assessments?	Agencies	Researchers