



# Perchlorate Exposure in Morrow and Umatilla Counties: More Information Needed

The Oregon Department of Human Services SHINE (*Superfund Health Investigation and Education*) Program has finished a report on **perchlorate** exposure in Morrow and Umatilla Counties. Perchlorate has been found in groundwater and irrigation wells in the area by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. SHINE's report finds that more information on perchlorate levels in food is needed to determine if it is a health concern. Residents in the area who drink water containing perchlorate may be affected.

## What is perchlorate?

Perchlorate is a component of solid rocket fuel and some munitions. It is used in roadside flares and fireworks. It also forms naturally in the environment.

Perchlorate dissolves in water and may contaminate drinking water. Food crops may also contain perchlorate, if they are irrigated by contaminated water.

## How can perchlorate affect your health?

Perchlorate affects the body's ability to take in iodide. Because iodide is needed to make thyroid hormones, perchlorate exposure may affect thyroid functioning.

Maintaining thyroid levels is essential for proper mental and physical development. For this reason, young children, and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding are of special concern. Perchlorate exposure is also a concern for individuals with thyroid problems.

## What are SHINE's next steps?

- Examine how perchlorate in foods may contribute to exposure of Morrow and Umatilla residents.
- Determine whether perchlorate exposure is a health concern for area residents.

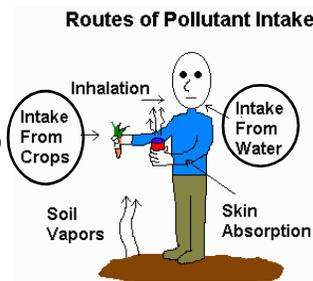
## How can you obtain the report?

Visit our website at:  
[www.healthoregon.org/superfund](http://www.healthoregon.org/superfund)

Please send us your comments by January 31, 2006. For more information on where to direct comments, please see the report.

## What is exposure?

- Environmental exposures happen when we inhale, absorb through our skin, or ingest chemicals or other environmental pollutants. Exposure to pollutants does not mean that we will get sick.
- The main routes of exposure for perchlorate in Morrow and Umatilla Counties are ingestion of perchlorate through contaminated water and possibly food.



## What did SHINE find in its investigation?

1. It is possible that residents are being exposed to perchlorate by drinking water from wells where perchlorate has been found.
2. More information on perchlorate levels in foods available to residents is needed.
3. Fetuses, infants, young children, pregnant and nursing mothers, and people with severe iodine deficiency or hypothyroidism are particularly sensitive to perchlorate exposure.