There are still opportunities to be in the study!

To date, over 350 people have taken part. We are nearing our goal of 500 participants. There are only a limited number of appointments that will be available between now and the end of October. If you or someone you know was invited earlier this year to take part in this study, but was unable to make an appointment, there is still an opportunity to participate. Anyone who was selected and is interested now, can call to set up an appointment. Please call 218-878-2193 as soon as possible to schedule an appointment. Sorry we can’t guarantee an opening after October 18.

Mark Your Calendars: First Nations Biomonitoring Initiative Staff to visit Fond du Lac

What: Hear about the First Nations Biomonitoring Initiative (FNBI). This project’s goal was to learn about chemical exposures in First Nations peoples in Canada.

When: Tuesday September 17, 2013 from 5:00-6:30 p.m.

Where: Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College Auditorium, 2101 14th St., Cloquet, MN 55720

Why: The FNBI study is very similar to the Fond du Lac Community Biomonitoring Study. Both studies tested for almost all of the same chemicals. First Nations project staff will share what they learned from their work.

Background: The Assembly of First Nations did the FNBI study because of concerns about toxic chemicals in food, air, and water. Thirteen First Nation communities across Canada took part. The results will help First Nations leadership to understand the impact of chemicals on their people and protect their health and lifeways.

Presentation is free! Questions and comments are welcome! Light refreshments will be served.

If you have questions about this upcoming event please contact Phil Defoe, the Fond du Lac Biomonitoring Study Manager at 218-878-2135.
Chemical Highlight: Triclosan

For each newsletter, one chemical being tested in people’s blood and/or urine will be highlighted.

Triclosan is an antibacterial chemical found in many household items, the environment, and people. It is one of the environmental chemicals of emerging concern that will be tested for in the Fond du Lac Community Biomonitoring study.

Triclosan has been used for more than 30 years as a preservative and a broad-spectrum antimicrobial agent. It is added to many common household and personal care items to kill germs, resist mildew and odors, and extend products’ shelf life. Examples of products that contain triclosan are: liquid soap, mouthwash, acne medication, cosmetics, deodorant, lotion, toothpaste, dish-washing liquids, plastics, and textiles.

Triclosan can get into a person’s body. When a person uses products with triclosan, small amounts can be absorbed through the skin or mouth. It usually does not stay in a person’s body very long. A urine test can estimate the amount of triclosan a person has been exposed to recently from all sources they have contacted. Many people have triclosan in their bodies. It was found in the urine of nearly 75 percent of people six years and older who took part in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) in 2003–2004.

Simply having triclosan in your body does not mean that you will get sick from it. The effects on human health from small amounts of triclosan (such as those in the environment) are not known at this time. Some products with triclosan cause skin irritation, but this has been rare. Because some scientific studies have recently raised questions about whether triclosan might be able to harm some people, more research is needed.

Current regulations allow companies to use triclosan in their products. However, it is not a necessary ingredient. There is no evidence that it provides extra benefits in most household items. For example, anti-bacterial soaps and hand sanitizers use triclosan as the active ingredient to kill bacteria and other germs – but “plain” soap and water also does this.

Triclosan can also affect the natural environment. It mainly enters the aquatic environment in wastewater because water treatment does not remove all of it. This means it can end up in lakes, rivers, and water sources where it potentially may harm fish and other organisms. You can read about a University of Minnesota study that found triclosan in Minnesota waters at: http://www.mndaily.com/2013/01/23/u-research-finds-antibacterial-ingredient-minnesota-lakes.

The Minnesota Department of Health recommends against using products containing triclosan at home because of possible risks and few benefits. Anyone who is concerned can choose items that don’t contain triclosan. To avoid triclosan, read product labels and ingredient lists before buying.