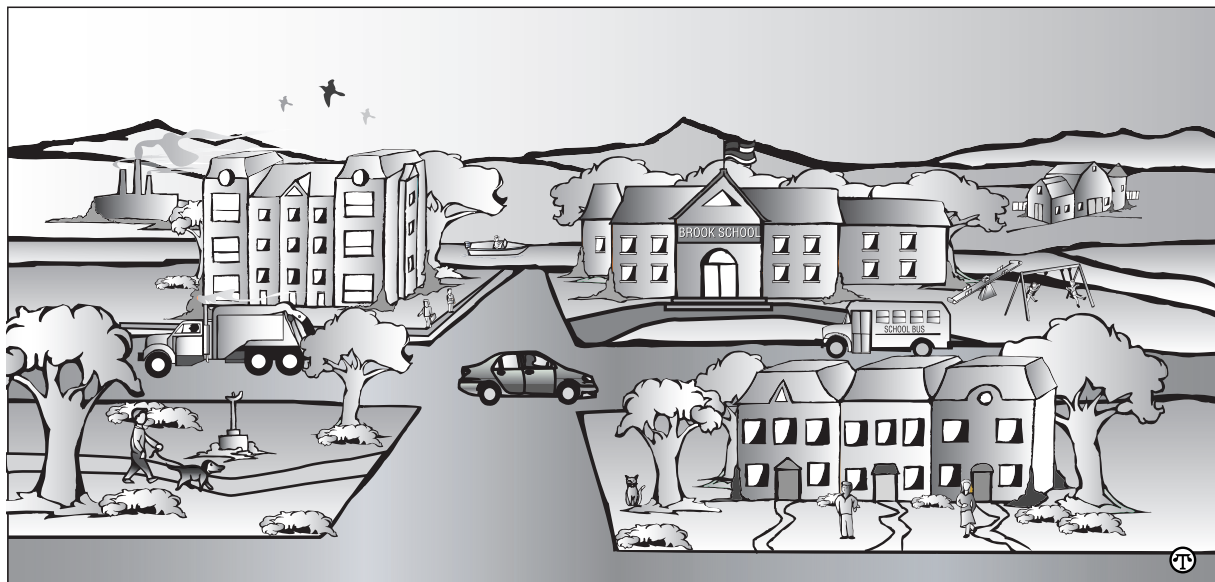


Health Update

New Resource For Consumers Looking For The Lowdown On Toxic Chemicals



The park? The factory? Your office? To learn what toxic chemicals might be lurking, “stroll” through Tox Town. The Web site uses colors, sounds, and animation to add interest.

(NAPSA)—Ever wonder about the health risks that might be posed by a nearby factory? Are there substances in your drinking water that are doing you more harm than good? If you’ve heard that a particular chemical has been dumped near your home or office, is there some way to find out about its effects?

Tox Town, a new Web site by the National Library of Medicine, can help answer these questions and many more. Tox Town offers information on:

- Common places in a community where toxic chemicals might be found,
- Non-technical descriptions of chemicals,
- Links to selected, authoritative chemical information on the Internet,
- A description of how the environment can affect your health, and
- Internet resources on environmental health topics.

Tox Town is a new Web site

intended to explore how best to provide this kind of information to a general audience.

You can click on a town location, like the school, and see a dollhouse-style cutaway view of that building. Toxic chemicals that might be found in the school are listed, with links to selected Web resources about them.

In this just-released Web site, Tox Town gives information on a number of chemicals that might be encountered in common locations in an imaginary small town.

Future plans are to expand Tox Town to include more chemicals and add new scenes, such as an urban community and a farming region.

Among the chemicals are such common hazardous materials as asbestos, carbon monoxide, lead, and radon. Information on each is just a click away. There are even links for searching the scientific literature.

Donald A.B. Lindberg, M.D., director of the National Library of Medicine, noted that the library

has for years had a popular set of databases for toxicologists and other scientists.

“With Tox Town,” said Lindberg, “we can now provide high quality information on this subject for a general audience via the Web.” He emphasized that the site is free and that no registration is necessary.

The Library’s Web site, at www.nlm.nih.gov, has become one of the most popular destinations for doctors, scientists, and consumers who seek health and biomedical information tailored to their interest.

The National Library of Medicine, the world’s largest library of the health sciences, is in Bethesda, Maryland. The Library is a part of the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services.

To learn more about this new service, visit the Tox Town Web site at <http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov>.