

food spoilage is also of special concern. A national reporting system for food-borne outbreaks of disease has been established.

A report by the committee on diet and cardiovascular disease was submitted in 1977 and many of its recommendations were adopted by the department. They will form the basis of nutrition education programs and have a marked influence on food regulations, labelling and advertising.

Drugs. The major activities are focused on the principle that Canadians should have access to drugs that are both safe and effective. A major part of the activity is devoted to clearing new drugs for marketing in Canada and maintaining a post-marketing surveillance over these products. For example, manufacturers of new drugs with unknown properties are required by law to submit extensive evidence of the safety and effectiveness of their products prior to marketing. This includes information about therapeutic properties and side effects. Continued surveillance of the new product is maintained. Additionally, the branch monitors manufacturers' compliance with official specifications and regulations setting standards for manufacturing facilities and quality control of drugs. Products such as serums and vaccines are subject to special licensing requirements for safety and effectiveness.

A quality assessment of drugs program integrates the above activities and provides information to provincial governments relating to manufacturers' facilities and their compliance with standards for their products.

Non-medical use of drugs. The non-medical use of drugs directorate administers three programs concerned with alcohol, tobacco and drugs, with its main focus on prevention. In addition, the directorate supports treatment and rehabilitation programs, and engages in information programs, community projects and research. Information programs include media campaigns, provision of informational materials and education programs to increase awareness, understanding and public concern about alcohol, tobacco and drug-related problems and responses, as well as increase knowledge, attitudes and skills which will improve public decision-making concerning substance abuse. Community projects are being funded through an alcohol-tobacco-drug resources fund. Projects are funded for up to three years in an effort to demonstrate new ways of preventing or treating problems or securing changes in existing policies and programs. Intramural and extramural research develops a knowledge base on alcohol, tobacco and drug use and of public health and socio-economic problems associated with them.

Environmental health. The environmental health directorate studies the adverse effects on human health of the chemical and physical environment, and ensures the safety, effectiveness, and non-fraudulent nature of medical devices. The directorate develops health hazard assessments for work and home environments, household products, and air and water criteria. Research on radiation hazards is conducted and environmental and occupational exposures are monitored. The directorate enforces the Radiation Emitting Devices Act and that portion of the Food and Drugs Act dealing with medical devices and radioactive pharmaceuticals, and it also administers the Hazardous Products Act jointly with the consumer and corporate affairs department. Under the Environmental Contaminants Act the directorate collects data and investigates substances that may be a danger to human health or the environment and, when necessary, recommends restricted or prohibited use of substances.

Disease control. The laboratory centre for disease control directorate is involved in the development and implementation of improved laboratory diagnostic procedures and other measures to combat communicable disease agents. Activities entail developing methods for detecting and preventing disease, and producing and distributing standardized diagnostic reagents to federal, provincial and other health organizations. A national reference service is provided for identification of disease-producing bacteria, viruses and parasites, and development of a co-operative federal-provincial program for laboratory quality assurance and proficiency testing. The directorate also maintains surveillance of birth defects, poisonings, and adverse drug reactions. Epidemiological research is carried out on communicable and non-communicable diseases.