

Case Scenario

A 35 year-old mother, Mrs. Pearson comes to your Well Baby Clinic with her four children. She's been to the clinic before and has lived in this rural, bayside town all her life. Her husband is a fisherman. He brings home food from his daily catch. As the nurse in the clinic, your nutritional assessment indicates the family eats fish about four times a week.

In the past three weeks, Mrs. Pearson and her daughter, Sally, age 7, have been feeling sick with headaches, malaise, nausea and vomiting. Because of her symptoms, Mrs. Pearson believes she's pregnant again. And she thinks Sally's symptoms are due to the sudden, unexplained deaths of her cat and dog to whom she was very attached. Both the cat and dog were acting oddly before they died. The vet thinks they may have been suffering from some type of seizure disorder.

Everyone else is healthy, except her husband. Recently, he's been complaining of occasional numbness around the mouth and fingertips. But he says everyone that fishes with him feels the same way. Mrs. Pearson thinks it's due to his occasional alcohol use or just old age. She said he's been staggering and losing his balance lately, and he certainly seems not to hear as well as he used to.

Mrs. Pearson is aware of some newspaper stories and warnings that the fish is not safe to eat. But she says she doesn't believe them because she and her family have been eating the fish from the nearby lakes for generations without any problems. It's just another effort by the media to get everyone all riled up. Besides even if she wanted to, she can't afford to buy meat at the supermarket.

She just wants to get her WIC coupons and go home. She states she is not feeling well. Her daughter appears dehydrated and lethargic.

Questions:

- 1) Using the "I PREPARE" model, identify 3 or 4 questions that you would ask Mrs. Pearson in order to obtain a more detailed family health history.
- 2) In addition, try to name 3 or 4 agencies or resources you might consult to identify if there is an environmental health connection to the illnesses.