



Michigan Network for  
**CHILDREN'S**  
**Environmental**  
**HEALTH**

# Toxic Times

*A recap of the top stories on toxics  
in Michigan and beyond.*

News Highlights from August 5, 2009 – August 20, 2009

## MICHIGAN NEWS

### **Michigan chemical plants safety risks**

*The Detroit News*, Tuesday, August 18, 2009

Almost 60 chemical plants in Michigan pose a serious risk to populations of at least 10,000 if they were to succumb to a terrorist attack or major industrial accident, claims the Washington, D.C.-based Center for American Progress.

<http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20090818/METRO/908180337/Groups--Mich.-chemical-plants-safety-risks>

### **Study links Great Lakes fish and diabetes**

*Chicago Public Radio*, Sunday, August 16, 2009

Research by the University of Illinois at Chicago has correlated an increased risk of diabetes with Great Lakes fish. The suspected contaminant is DDE, a metabolized form of the pesticide DDT.

<http://www.wbez.org/Content.aspx?audioID=36121>

### **Years of food processors' waste turns Michigan's natural treasures to ruins**

*The Detroit Free Press*, Monday, August 10, 2009

Many of Michigan's wetlands, streams, and marshes have been contaminated by food processors, which have released toxic metals and arsenic into them.

<http://www.freep.com/article/20090810/NEWS05/908100331/Food-processors--waste-turns-Mich.-natural-treasures-to-ruins>

## NATIONAL NEWS

### **Mercury-tainted fish found widely in U.S. streams**

*Reuters*, Thursday, August 20, 2009

Scientists have found mercury contamination in every fish of the hundreds they tested from 291 of the nation's streams. The research showed that mercury is not only prevalent in the environment, but also the magnitude of the contamination, as more than 25% were above EPA guidelines for moderate fish consumption.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUSTRE57J01420090820>

### **FDA to reconsider BPA's use in food packaging**

*The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Monday, August 17, 2009

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced it would consider new studies regarding the safety of bisphenol A (BPA) and re-evaluate their ruling by November 30, 2009.

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/53515392.html>

### **Chemical industry gives support to reform**

*The Washington Post*, Sunday, August 9, 2009

The chemical industry says it has joined with environmentalists, public health groups, and consumer product safety advocates in asking the government for chemical policy reform. The industry will agree to reveal the information it has collected over the years on various chemicals, stating that regulation is the best way to win consumer confidence.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/08/AR2009080802566.html>

### **New lead limits take effect for small businesses**

*The Associated Press via Google*, Friday, August 14, 2009

The new lead requirements, as passed in the U.S. Children's Products Safety Improvement Act and adjusted by the Consumer Products Safety Commission, are causing difficulties for some small businesses as testing costs and labeling start adding up. Federal agencies and officials have said they are working to address the concerns of business while maintaining the goal of the policy.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jujM2wkdKlfsSKdYDkZxEt0rXMugD9A26D3O2>

### **Lead associated with high blood pressure during pregnancy**

*Environmental Health News*, Monday, August 10, 2009

A new study has found that women with higher blood lead levels halfway through their pregnancy also had an increased risk of high blood pressure. All women in the study had blood lead levels at or below the 'acceptable' range for most health agencies.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/lead-associated-with-hypertension-in-pregnancy/>

### **Popular herbicide more deadly to liver cells than its active chemical alone**

*Environmental Health News*, Tuesday, August 18, 2009

A recent study of different varieties of the herbicide Roundup showed that the concentrations of the active ingredient—the known toxicant glyphosate—were independent of the adverse effects observed on human liver cells. The findings suggest that the 'inert' ingredients may play a role in the human toxicity of the product.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/roundup-mix-more-toxic-to-liver-cells-than-glyphosate/>

### **Diesel exhaust reduces sperm production in mice exposed before birth**

*Environmental Health News*, Friday, August 14, 2009

Adult male mice whose mothers were exposed to particulates found in diesel exhaust were more likely to have fertility problems than those whose mothers had no such exposure.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/particulates-lower-sperm-in-mice-exposed-in-utero/>

### **Scientists analyze blood to test for exposure to toxic airplane air**

*CNN.com*, Monday, August 17, 2009

A team of scientists at the University of Washington are analyzing blood and plasma samples from individuals who claim to have been poisoned by the air on airplanes. The results will be able to definitively tell whether or not the participants were exposed to chemicals found in the engines of the vehicles.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2009/US/08/17/bleed.air.tests/index.html>

### **Age, cosmetics use related to levels of synthetic musk chemicals in blood**

*Environmental Health News*, Wednesday, August 19, 2009

A new study has found that concentrations of certain synthetic fragrances—known as polycyclic musks—increase when the use of perfumes and lotions containing them increase. This implies that they are potentially bioaccumulative in humans.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/synthetic-musks-in-blood-related-to-cosmetics-use/>

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **Scientists uncover new ocean threat from plastics**

*The London Independent*, Thursday, August 20, 2009

Research has shown that, contrary to popular belief, plastic does degrade, especially when exposed to the conditions of the open ocean. The floating refuse releases plasticizers and other synthetic compounds—some known or suspected as being detrimental to human health.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/scientists-uncover-new-ocean-threat-from-plastics-1774337.html>

### **Air pollution travels, kills thousands annually**

*Discovery News*, Friday, August 14, 2009

A new study has found that airborne particulates—in this case, any small, solid airborne particles—travel across national and continental boundaries and are responsible for about 380,000 deaths each year.

<http://dsc.discovery.com/news/2009/08/14/air-pollution-overseas.html>

### **Ozone is a long-range killer**

*New Scientist*, Thursday, August 13, 2009

New models of ozone production and public health predict that more than 20,000 lives could be saved if each industrialized region of the world would cut its emissions by a fifth. Additionally, the model shows that most of the adverse effects do not occur in the country of origin.

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn17609-ozone-is-a-longrange-killer.html>

### **From weight gain to low libido, how women's hormones make men ill**

*The London Daily Mail*, Tuesday, August 18, 2009

Estrogen and testosterone—often believed to be exclusive female and male hormones, respectively—are present in mixtures in all people, and what determines effects is the appropriate proportional balance between the two. However, some environmental contaminants, along with certain natural processes, can disrupt that balance, particularly in men.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1207227/From-weight-gain-low-libido-womens-hormones-make-MEN-ill.html>

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*The Michigan Network for Children's Environmental Health is a coalition of health professionals, health-affected groups, environmental organizations, and others dedicated to a safe and less toxic world for Michigan's children. Through education, outreach, and advocacy, we seek to protect Michigan's children from adverse impacts caused by exposure to widespread hazardous chemicals. Please visit: [www.mnceh.org](http://www.mnceh.org).*