



Michigan Network for
CHILDREN'S
Environmental
HEALTH

Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from February 16, 2010 – March 8, 2010

MICHIGAN NEWS

Help parents know if toys may be toxic

Detroit Free Press, February 27, 2010

Michigan senators have the opportunity to help our state's children stay healthy by passing a package of bills, already passed by the house, that require manufacturers to disclose when toys and other children's products contain toxic chemicals. The bills don't call for bans or specify which substances are hazardous and would not affect retailers or small manufacturers. In fact, small toy shops are among the bills' biggest supporters. The bills would generate consumer information that would be posted online for parents to consult when buying products for their children. The ultimate goal is for manufacturers to stop using chemicals identified as hazardous in their children's products.

<http://www.freep.com/article/201002270300/OPINION01/2270318>

Are Flame Retardants Putting us at Risk?

Environment Report, March 8, 2010

Rebecca Williams begins a five-part series on the dangers PBDE flame-retardants. Americans have the highest levels of PBDEs of anyone in the world. In this story, Williams has her home tested to find out how common toxic flame-retardants are.

<http://www.environmentreport.org/show.php?showID=375>

Unsafe at home?

Detroit Free Press, Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Two Canadian researchers and environmentalists recently wrote a book based on a series of human experiments that showed how quickly levels of harmful chemicals could rise in their bodies. "Slow Death by Rubber Duck: The Secret Dangers of Everyday Things", concludes that seemingly harmless everyday products are exposing us to dangerous levels of chemicals that overtime can be harmful.

<http://www.freep.com/article/20100223/FEATURES01/2230332/1026/Features01/Unsafe-at-home>

Viewpoint: Do flame-retardants prevent fires while harming out health?

Kalamazoo Gazette, Monday, February 22, 2010

"Viewpoint" blogger from the Kalamazoo Gazette looks into what PBDEs are, what they are used in, and recent studies showing their presence in humans. She talks about their danger to children and what is being done to keep our children safe.

http://blog.mlive.com/readreact/2010/02/viewpoint_do_flame_retardants.html

Toy Safety Bill Stalls in State Senate

WSJM, Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Many parents may not even be aware of toxic chemicals used in the manufacturing process of their children's toys as shown by the dozens of toys recalled in recent years. Independent toy retailers, health care providers and the Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan are pressing the State Senate to pass the Children's Safe Products Act.

<http://www.wsjm.com/pages/6386113.php?>

NATIONAL NEWS

States Push EPA, Congress to Curb Business Confidentiality Claims for Chemicals

New York Times, Monday, March 1, 2010

The 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act forces companies to provide information to the EPA about the toxicity of the chemicals they use. However, it also prohibits the EPA from sharing that information with the public and state and local authorities. States are demanding that the law be changed.

<http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2010/03/01/01greenwire-states-push-epa-congress-to-curb-business-conf-35359.html>

State measure targets tainted jewelry

Asbury Park Press, Sunday, February 28, 2010

Recent concerns about potentially toxic materials in jewelry have incited legislation that recently cleared another hurdle in New Jersey. The bill was passed by assembly members 75-0 and has been sent to the Senate. The bill would bar the sale, distribution, importation, and manufacture of jewelry that contains materials that are unsafe.

<http://www.app.com/article/20100228/NEWS03/100228013/NJ-measure-targets-tainted-jewelry>

U.S. examining possible effects of bisphenol A

Reuters, Thursday, February 25, 2010

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences is spending \$20 million to investigate the health effects of BPA exposure in 11 new animal studies. Canada already plans to ban plastic baby bottles made with BPA and there are health groups in the U.S. and U.K. call for similar action.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE61O62F20100225>

A chemical that shouldn't be in breast milk

Raleigh News and Observer, Friday, February 26, 2010

According to researchers at the UNC School of Public Health, almost three quarters of the 300 North Carolina mothers who participated in a recent scientific study on flame-retardants in breast milk has some toxic chemicals known as PBDEs. PBDEs are commonly used in household products like computers, televisions, mattresses, and textiles to slow the spread of fires. PBDEs in breast milk have been shown to be a source of exposure to breast fed infants.

<http://www.newsobserver.com/2010/02/26/358315/a-chemical-that-shouldnt-be-in.html>

Keeping harmful chemicals out of water

Marketplace, Thursday, February 25, 2010

A House panel is investigating how to prevent synthetic chemicals, called endocrine disruptors, found in everyday products. Health advocates are putting pressure on the EPA to keep them out of drinking water. The synthetic chemicals are linked to sexual abnormalities in fish and there are worries that they could potentially affect humans.
<http://marketplace.publicradio.org/display/web/2010/02/25/am-endocrine-disruptors/>

Consumer products may harm your health

The Bemidji Pioneer, Wednesday, February 24, 2010

Last year, Congress banned lead in children's products. Recently it has been found that other toxic metals like cadmium are simply replacing lead in these products. A recent report called 'Health Case for Reforming the Toxic Substances Control Act' explains the toll that toxic chemicals are having on our health and our budget.
<http://www.bemidjipioneer.com/event/article/id/100016229/group/Opinion/>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Loopholes in pesticide regulation

China Daily, Tuesday, March 2, 2010

A highly toxic pesticide called isocarbophos which has been banned in China, was detected in cowpeas sold in several provinces across the country. The pesticide was banned in 2004 but has been found on sale in some parts of the island of Hainan. China's current regulation for pesticide management focuses on the supervision of pesticide production and does not address their sale and use.
http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-03/02/content_9521603.htm

Bottle tops, shotgun caps and toothbrushes: Scientists discover giant plastic rubbish patch in the Atlantic

London Daily Mail, Thursday, February 25, 2010

A large patch of floating garbage has recently been discovered in the Atlantic Ocean. The area is similar in volume to the 'great Pacific garbage patch' and is composed of plastic as well as other discarded materials that are known to harm seabirds and marine life.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1253511/Scientists-discover-giant-plastic-rubbish-patch-North-Atlantic.html>

PCBs found in fish oil capsules, suit says

CBC Canada, Tuesday, March 2, 2010

According to a lawsuit filed by Mateel Environmental Justice Foundation some fish oil capsules being sold in California contain trace amounts of PCBs. The lawsuit claims that the law has been broken by not placing the PCB levels in the fish oil on the labels. The plaintiffs hope that the lawsuit will begin to force companies to reduce the levels of PCBs in their products.

<http://www.cbc.ca/consumer/story/2010/03/02/consumer-fish-oil-pcb.html>

NEWSLETTERS FROM MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

EcoLink

E-Newsletter of the Ecology Center

February 2010

<http://www.ecocenter.org/newsletter/ecolink/feb10/index.php>

Healthy Children Project Monthly e-news

Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan

February 2010

<http://ldaofmichigan.org/healthychildnews.htm>.

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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.