



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 2, 2010 – February 15, 2010

MICHIGAN NEWS

Michigan Pediatricians Interested in Improving Knowledge of Environmental Health Factors

Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine, January/February 2010

A survey of Michigan pediatricians documents their knowledge of environmental issues and the extent to which they are aware of potential environmental influences on their patients' health and related treatment resources. Pediatricians generally feel confident in dealing with lead and second-hand smoke, but feel less confident in managing pesticide, mercury, mold, polychlorinated biphenyl, and air pollution exposures.

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/112736813/home>

Children's Safe Products Act Stalls in Legislature Despite Broad Support

Public News Service, February 12, 2010

Independent toy retailers, health care providers, and advocates for children with learning disabilities are pressing state lawmakers to pass a new law addressing the continuing threat of toxic chemicals in children's products. The proposed Children's Safe Products Act would force manufacturers to use more transparency, including disclosing the names of chemicals used in toys. The legislation has been stalled in Michigan since last April, but recent discoveries of lead and other toxic chemicals in toys have renewed interest in the law.

<http://www.publicnewsservice.org/index.php?/content/article/12669-1>

Great Lakes Superfund Sites

Great Lakes Echo, Monday, February 1, 2010

Hazardous waste sites in the Great Lakes make up a third of all such sites in the United States. This article contains links to information on Michigan's and other Great Lakes states Superfund sites.

<http://greatlakesecho.org/2010/02/01/monday-mashup-great-lakes-superfund-sites/>

EPA deal puts Dow in charge of identifying dioxin exposure hazards

Michigan Messenger, Thursday, February 11, 2010

The cleanup framework finalized between the EPA and Dow leaves Dow in charge of investigating the dioxin contamination in the Saginaw River watershed and designing its cleanup. Dioxin, a toxic byproduct of chemical manufacturing processes, has contaminated 52 miles of watershed and has spread from Dow's Midland facility to the Saginaw Bay.

<http://michiganmessenger.com/34654/epa-deal-puts-dow-in-charge-of-identifying-dioxin-exposure-hazards>

NATIONAL NEWS

America pushes to overhaul chemical safety law

Nature, Thursday, February 4, 2010

The Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 allows the EPA to test chemicals that pose a health risk only if there is evidence of harm. Since the passage of TSCA, only five chemicals have been restricted. This spring, Congress is likely to look at a bill that would put the burden of proof of safety on manufacturers. 62,000 chemicals that were already on the market before 1976 were exempt. Since the passage of TSCA, of the 21,000 chemicals that have been registered only 15% included any health and safety data. Of those 21,000 chemicals the EPA has only been able to require testing of 200.

www.rff.org/Documents/News/100204_Nature_Davies_on_Toxics.pdf

Good Chemistry for Some Household Sprays

The New York Times, Wednesday, February 10, 2010

Six years ago S.C. Johnson & Son agreed to disclose the ingredients in their home cleaning supplies. If the New York State Supreme Court rules a lawsuit brought by environmental and health groups earlier this month can move forward then other cleaning product manufacturers will be forced to disclose the ingredients of their products as well.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/11/garden/11clean.html>

Study finds a link between plastics chemical BPA and childhood asthma

Los Angeles Times, Thursday, February 4, 2010

Researchers from the University of Texas in Galveston have released a study done with mice that shows exposure to BPA during pregnancy may increase chances of offspring having asthma. BPA is commonly used in plastic bottles and linings in cans and has been linked to an increased risk in cancer as well as other morbidities.

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/greenspace/2010/02/study-finds-a-link-between-plastics-chemical-bpa-and-asthma.html>

Senators call to add cadmium to list of banned substances

Alexandria Echo Press, Saturday, February 6, 2010

After the release of a new report showing that children's jewelry containing cadmium is being sold in stores across the United States, six senators including Al Franken (D-MN) have introduced legislation that will define cadmium as a banned hazardous substance. Cadmium is a carcinogen and has been shown to cause developmental problems in children.

<http://www.echopress.com/event/article/id/72032/group/home/>

Cadmium found in adult jewelry; 1 store pulls item

Yahoo News, Tuesday, February 2, 2010

A California environmental group revealed new data showing necklaces and bracelets bought at leading retailers Saks Fifth Avenue and Aeropostale, among others, had high

levels of the toxic metal cadmium. In some cases, cadmium comprised as much as 75% by weight. One of the pieces was from China and another was from India.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100202/ap_on_bi_ge/us_cadmium_jewelry_1

Target pulls Valentine's toys over lead concerns

San Francisco Chronicle, Tuesday, February 9, 2010

Target is pulling its Valentine's Day "Message Bears" from shelves after California's attorney general voiced concerns that they toys may have had illegal levels of lead. The products are made in China and investigators from the Center for Environmental Health found that the inflated vinyl letters contained levels well over the federal limits for lead in children's products.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2010/02/09/financial/f142710S42.DTL>

Weed killer atrazine may be linked to birth defect

Reuters UK, Monday, February 8, 2010

A study by Dr. Sarah Waller and colleagues at the University of Washington have found a two to four fold increase in gastrochisis over the last three decades. Gastrochisis is when part of a newborn's intestines bulges through a separation in their belly. Waller and her team studied the link between atrazine and gastrochisis. Washington has double the national average of cases and the highest percentage per population of gastrochisis was in a county where the primary industry is agriculture. The study used medical data and USGS database on agricultural spraying to correlate birth defects in relation to proximity of spraying sites.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE6174DW20100208>

Toilet paper is major emitter of bisphenol-A

Nature and Nurture

It's common knowledge that BPA is commonly found in such items in plastic bottles, canned-food liners, and some building materials. A less known product containing BPA is toilet paper. According to the study the concentration of BPA in toilet paper can be 430 mg/kg dry mass.

<http://www.buildinggreen.com/live/index.cfm/2008/8/26/Toilet-paper-bisphenol-A-wastewater-recycled>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Lancet Retracts Study Tying Vaccine to Autism

The Wall Street Journal, Wednesday, February 3, 2010

The British medical journal that first published an article suggesting a link between autism and vaccines has retracted the study. The withdrawal supports scientific evidence that vaccines don't cause autism. The 1998 study of 12 children was the one of the main causes of the worry that the MMR vaccine caused autism. Concern about vaccine safety caused a decrease in children in Britain as well as the United States. The journal is being criticized for not retracting the study sooner.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704022804575041212437364420.html>

Philippines finds mercury-laced Chinese cosmetics

Agence France-Presse, Wednesday, February 10, 2010

Health regulators in the Philippines have banned three Chinese-made cosmetic products after they were found to have dangerous amounts of mercury. The three are creams bearing the brand of Jiaoli. Specific amounts of mercury in the creams were not given but levels were “exceeding the allowable limit of one part per million” according to the health department.

<http://news.malaysia.msn.com/regional/article.aspx?cp-documentid=3850822>

Warning: toxic leather shoes sold here

Johannesburg Independent, Monday, February 8, 2010

Research conducted by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation has shown that leather shoes contain metals and chemicals that could be hazardous to a person’s health. 21 different brands of shoes were tested. The toxic compounds are thought to originate from the tanning, preservation and dyeing processes.

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=14&art_id=vn20100208103908758C606012

NEWSLETTERS FROM MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

EcoLink

E-Newsletter of the Ecology Center

January 2010

<http://www.ecocenter.org/newsletter/ecolink/jan10/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.