



Michigan Network for
CHILDREN'S
Environmental
HEALTH

Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from July 3, 2009 – July 22, 2009

(Please note that we are now issuing "Toxic Times" every other week. We welcome your feedback! Please write to gen@ecocenter.org. Thank-you!)

MICHIGAN NEWS

Are your children's toys safe? Supporters of new rules show which playthings could hurt kids

The Kalamazoo Gazette, Tuesday, July 21, 2009

The Children's Safe Products Act, a group of seven bills passed by the state House of Representatives and currently in the Senate Health Policy Committee, would inform parents in Michigan if children's products contained any compounds from a list of chemicals of concern.

http://www.mlive.com/living/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2009/07/are_your_childrens_toys_safe_s.html

To see video coverage of this story, please visit:

<http://wkznews.blogspot.com/2009/07/video-giant-toy-duck-promotes-childrens.html>

Great Lakes fish consumption advisories rise slightly; researchers question extent of mercury risk

Great Lakes Echo, Friday, July 17, 2009

The Canadian nonprofit Environmental Defence has released a report stating that the number of fish advisories due to environmental contaminants—such as PCBs, dioxins, and mercury—has increased in the Great Lakes between 2007 and 2009. In Michigan, mercury levels in fish have increased, but levels of other contaminants have decreased or shown no change.

<http://greatlakesecho.org/2009/07/17/great-lakes-fish-consumption-advisories-rise-slightly-researchers-question-extent-of-mercury-risk/>

Counties now have authority to pass more stringent anti-smoking rules

The Charlevoix Courier, Wednesday, June 22, 2009

The Michigan Supreme Court ruled that counties may enact tougher smoking bans than state regulation. Smoking in bars and restaurants shall still be regulated by the state, as per an exception granted by the court.

<http://www.charlevoixcourier.com/articles/2009/07/22/news/doc4a6747a52eded761074046.txt>

Hidden risk? Research suggests firefighting carries an insidious hazard: cancer

The Flint News, Saturday, July 11, 2009

Analysis by the University of Cincinnati suggests that firefighters suffer significantly higher rates of certain cancers than the general public. However, the exact cause of the cancer incidence rates is unknown.

http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2009/07/hidden_risk_research_suggests.html

One-year extension filed for incinerator

The Detroit News, Monday, July 20, 2009

The majority owner of the Detroit incinerator, Energy Investors Fund of Boston, will force the city to send garbage to the incinerator for another year. The enforcing contract, which is causing a rift between the Detroit City Council and Mayor Dave Bing, would result in a \$30-200 million lawsuit if breached.

<http://www.detnews.com/article/20090720/METRO01/907200329/1410/METRO01/One-year-extension-filed-for-incinerator>

NATIONAL NEWS

Chemicals in our bodies

On Point with Tom Ashbrook – NPR, Monday, July 6, 2009

For years, signs of endocrine disruptors have been dramatic—amphibians with extra limbs and intersex fish being among them. Now, the chemicals in the water supply that cause these deformities are being linked to human diseases, including diabetes, obesity, genital deformities, and early-onset puberty.

<http://www.onpointradio.org/2009/07/chemicals-in-our-water>

Maine identifies toxic chemicals

The Bangor Daily News, Saturday, July 18, 2009

Maine's state government has identified about 1,700 compounds that it lists as 'chemicals of high concern,' being those substances that pose a significant risk to human health and are found in consumer products. The list includes bisphenol-A (BPA), decaBDE, and phthalates.

<http://www.bangordailynews.com/detail/110979.html>

Red meat and poultry: two major sources of PBDE exposure in the US

Environmental Health News, Wednesday, July 22, 2009

Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) are ubiquitous environmental contaminants released from certain flame retardants. While it was usually assumed to be the case that household dust was the key source of exposure to these chemicals, a new study suggests that diet may play a role, as well.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/red-meat-and-poultry-sources-of-pbde/>

New option available for treating head lice

Pediatric Super Site, Wednesday, July 15, 2009

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved a 5% benzyl alcohol lotion for treatment of head lice. The alternative is welcome as head lice are not likely to develop resistance over time and it does not have a neurotoxic potential, both concerns with the still available prescription pesticide lindane.

<http://www.pediatricsupersite.com/view.aspx?rid=41645>

Do contaminants play a role in diabetes? Evidence is growing

Environmental Health Science, Monday, July 20, 2009

Recent studies have supported the case for environmental factors contributing to diabetes. While obesity and lack of exercise are still major factors, certain environmental pollutants may also be playing a role.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/diabetes-and-environmental-contaminants>

Concerns over bisphenol-A continue to grow

Science News, Saturday, July 18, 2009

Recent animal studies have linked bisphenol-A (BPA) to permanent damage to genes controlling reproduction and heart arrhythmias in females. Additionally, researchers are not sure exactly how BPA interacts with the body or even how long it remains after ingested.

http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/45214/title/Concerns_over_bisphenol_A_continue_to_grow

BPA may reduce fertility in lab mice

The Chicago Sun-Times, Monday, July 13, 2009

New research from the University of Illinois has shown that exposure to BPA can result in impaired growth and development of female reproductive cells in lab mice. More research is necessary to see if the results would be similar in humans.

<http://www.suntimes.com/lifestyles/health/1663138,CST-NWS-plastic13.article>

Study links kids' lower IQ scores to prenatal exposure to air pollution

The Charleston Gazette, Sunday, July 19, 2009

A New York study has found a link between prenatal exposure to air pollution and lower IQ scores, supporting the case that smog can harm the developing brain.

<http://wvgazette.com/News/200907190357>

Polluted air impairs neurons that regulate heart rate in mice

Environmental Health News, Tuesday, July 7, 2009

A study on mice has shown the fine particulate matter can interfere with the function of neurons that control heart rate, suggesting a cause for correlation of air pollution and heart disease. Fine particulate matter, which is less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter, is the product of combustion, from forest fires to gasoline engines.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/particulates-alter-neurons-that-regulate-mice-heart-rate/>

Six surprising sources of indoor air pollution

The Daily Green, Monday, July 13, 2009

Indoor air can be two to five times as polluted as the air outside. While some forms of indoor air pollution are well-known, such as tobacco smoke, others are more insidious.

<http://www.thedailygreen.com/green-homes/eco-friendly/indoor-air-pollution-47020404>

Children more vulnerable to pesticides until age 7 due to lower enzyme level

Environmental Health News, Tuesday, July 21, 2009

An enzyme key to breaking down organophosphates—highly neurotoxic pesticides—does not reach levels comparable to adults until seven years of age. Additionally, researchers have found that genetic variation exists in the efficacy of the breakdown, resulting in some people being more susceptible to organophosphates. <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/children-are-more-vulnerable-to-pesticides-until-age-7/>

DDT breakdown chemical alters thyroid hormone function in pregnant women

Environmental Health News, Tuesday, July 14, 2009

DDE, a long-lived residue of DDT, has been linked to skewed thyroid hormone levels in pregnant women. Thyroid hormone levels can affect fetal brain development.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/dde-in-early-pregnancy-affects-thyroid-hormones/>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Toxic work: know your rights

The Tyee, Wednesday, July 15, 2009

A Canadian law, titled the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System, allows all employees to know what is in their workplace environment and to participate in choosing healthier alternatives. The law has been federal legislation since 1988.

<http://thetyee.ca/News/2009/07/15/ToxicRights/>

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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.