



Michigan Network for
CHILDREN'S
Environmental
HEALTH

Toxic Times

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

News Highlights from September 3, 2009 – September 17, 2009

MICHIGAN NEWS

Ecology Center releases consumer product database HealthyStuff.org

The Ecology Center has released a website-based database of consumer products and the potentially toxic chemicals contained within them. The website, HealthyStuff.org, went live Wednesday, September 16, 2009.

Detroit Free Press:

<http://www.freep.com/article/20090916/NEWS06/90916039/1320/New-site-reveals->

Detroit News:

<http://www.detnews.com/article/20090915/METRO02/909150328/1411/METRO02/Data>
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Dioxin exposure in Saginaw neighborhood has eased, but threats persist

The Michigan Messenger, Thursday, September 3, 2009

Dioxin remediation efforts in the contaminated areas of the Saginaw River watershed have reduced the risk for some of its residents. However, some threats still persist.

<http://michiganmessenger.com/25779/dioxin-exposure-in-saginaw-neighborhood-has-eased-but-threats-persist>

Great Lakes cleanup could take 77 years

The Associated Press via CBS News, Tuesday, September 15, 2009

A federal report from the U.S. government has claimed that, at the current pace, remediation of the most contaminated sites could take 77 years. The report also claimed that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency does not know the full extent of the damage at the sites, some of which have been identified since the late 1980s.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/09/15/national/main5314033.shtml>

NATIONAL NEWS

Group reveals toxic chemicals in consumer products

The New York Times, Wednesday, September 16, 2009

A new website-based database of toxic chemicals in consumer products has stirred debate about consumer exposure and health consequences. HealthyStuff.org, managed by the Michigan-based Ecology Center, went online Wednesday.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/17/business/energy-environment/17consumer.html?ref=business>

Lead, arsenic, found in products from handbags to car seats

USA Today, Wednesday, September 16, 2009

The Ann Arbor-based Ecology Center has launched a new consumer product database on the website HealthyStuff.org. The organization has found toxic chemicals in products ranging from handbags to pet supplies to car seats to backpacks.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2009-09-16-chemicals-products_N.htm

EPA to place limits on power plant water pollution

The Associated Press via the Washington Post, Tuesday, September 15, 2009

The U.S. EPA has decided to restrict the amount of toxic metals allowed in the water discharged from coal-fired power plants. Processes used to remove chemicals from the air—such as scrubbers—have increased the quantity of toxins in the water the plants discharge, which is thus far unregulated.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/15/AR2009091501692.html>

Toxic waters—clean water laws are neglected, at a cost in suffering

The New York Times, Saturday, September 12, 2009

Investigation by the Times shows that an estimated one-in-ten Americans is exposed to drinking water with dangerous chemicals in it or has failed some other public health benchmark.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/us/13water.html>

Why chemicals called obesogens may make you fat

Newsweek, Friday, September 11, 2009

New focus is being given to hormone-mimicking and endocrine-disrupting chemicals that may be responsible for obesity in children and cause lifelong effects.

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/215179>

CDC awards \$5 million to support state biomonitoring programs

Media-NewsWire.com, Thursday, September 17, 2009

The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention has awarded \$5 million to the states of California, New York, and Washington to monitor residents and their exposure to chemicals.

http://media-newsWire.com/release_1098893.html

“Serious” hazmat spills not reported

USA Today, Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Federal records show that though the U.S. Department of Transportation has the authority to penalize carriers who fail to fill out reports of hazardous material spills, it rarely does. Between 2006 and 2008, 1,199 “serious” incidents went unreported, compared to the 1,403 that were.

http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20090909/1ahazmat09_st.art.htm

A fight grows over labeling on cleaning products

The New York Times, Wednesday, September 16, 2009

Cleaning product companies are being placed in the difficult position of disclosing their chemical ingredients—and giving an advantage to their competitors—and facing the ire

of consumers demanding to know the chemical exposure of themselves and their children.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/17/business/energy-environment/17green.html?_r=1

Homeless nuclear waste

The Christian Science Monitor, Tuesday September 15, 2009

Even after fifty years of commercial nuclear power, the U.S. government still does not know what it will do with the 60,000 metric tons of nuclear waste that has been produced by the plants, a quantity that increases by 2,000 metric tons per year.

<http://features.csmonitor.com/environment/2009/09/15/homeless-nuclear-waste/>

High levels of lead in bone hard on the heart

Reuters Health, Tuesday, September 8, 2009

In a recent study, men who had the highest levels of lead in their bones were twice as likely to die over the course of the study, while their risk of death from heart-related problems rose sixfold.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSTRE58768820090908>

Chemical pollutants linked to fewer female births

Reuters Health via ABC News, Wednesday, September 16, 2009

Two banned chemicals, PBBs and PCBs, have been associated to an increased rate of male births, according to a new study. Though the chemicals were banned in the 1970s due to concerns of health effects, they are persistent in the environment.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory?id=8592170>

Work use of pesticides linked with Parkinson's

Reuters, Monday, September 14, 2009

A new U.S. study has found that work-related exposure to certain pesticides is associated with a more than three-fold increase in risk for Parkinson's disease.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSN14172099>

PCB risk feared at older N.E. schools

The Boston Globe, Sunday, September 6, 2009

Caulking used in the windows and masonry of older office buildings, college facilities, and schools in New England may be contaminated with now-banned PCBs.

http://www.boston.com/news/education/k_12/articles/2009/09/06/pcb_risk_feared_at_older_ne_schools/

iSniff: Pocket-sized pollution sensors promise big improvement in monitoring personal environment

Scientific American, Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Monitoring air pollution has been difficult for researchers, often being limited to rooftops or cumbersome backpack monitors. Researchers are now working at reducing the size of the technology so that it can be carried by children, a population of much concern but for whom specific data is often problematic to collect.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=air-pollution-monitoring-sensor-asthma-black-carbon>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

“Safe” lead levels harm children

BBC New, Wednesday, September 16, 2009

U.K. researchers have found that lead has adverse effects on children even below that country’s regulated “safe” level of 100 micrograms/L (a level the U.S. is not scheduled to enforce prior to August 2011). The researchers recommend that the level be reduced by half.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/8259639.stm>

Toxin in Agent Orange still polluting South Vietnam, study says

The Chicago Tribune, Sunday, September 13, 2009

A Canadian-based firm has discovered that TCDD—the most toxic substance in a family of chemicals known as dioxins—is persisting in parts of Vietnam where the U.S. used herbicides, particularly Agent Orange.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-tc-nw-vietnam-0912-0913sep13.0,7307758.story>

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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.