

Sources of Mercury

1 Factories and mines add mercury to rivers. Coal plants and volcanos add mercury to air. Put 4 grey LEGO® bricks on the sources of mercury to represent 4 mercury atoms.

Hg
(mercury)

2 Rain and rivers wash the mercury into lakes and oceans. Move the mercury into the water.

Hg
(mercury)

3 Bacteria in the soil add carbon and hydrogen atoms to the mercury to produce methylmercury. Build 4 methylmercury molecules. Place them on their pictures.

HgCH₃
(methylmercury)

Toxic Mercury in our Environment

Human Health Effects

7 When we eat a lot of big predator fish, methylmercury collects in our bodies and can cause problems! Move all 4 methylmercury molecules into the human.

4 Plankton picks up methylmercury from the soil. Move the methylmercury molecules into the plankton.

5 Small fish eat a lot of plankton and collect methylmercury in their bodies. Move 2 methylmercury molecules into each small fish.

6 Big predator fish eat a lot of small fish. More methylmercury collects in the bodies of the big fish. Move all 4 methylmercury molecules into the big fish.

1 per plankton →

2 per small fish →

4 per big fish →

4 or more per human

Biomagnification of Mercury in the Food Chain