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.

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

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.

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.

Toxic Mercury in our Environment

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

Human Health Effects

1. per plankton → 2. per small fish → 4. per big fish → 4 or more per human

Biomagnification of Mercury in the Food Chain