

ECHO Show #18 “What’s Fishy About Mercury?”

[Please translate title]

Deadlines: English version February 17, 2006

MTL translates ALL six versions February 28, 2006

Ethnic Talent tracks script: TBD/2006

MTL Translators—Thank you for working on this material. Please let me know if you have any questions. Notes:

Par. 2: The definition of mercury is meant to help the TV viewers and also, you, the translators. If these words pose any translation difficulty, please write or call me.

Par. 3: “Power plants” can also be called “power stations”, i.e. places where electrical power is produced.

Par. 7: The fish listed here (walleye, pike, bass) are the larger ones that EAT others; they are not the ones that GET EATEN by other fish. If your language does not have its own words for these fish, please leave them in English.

Good luck!

Larry

-1-

Millions of Americans enjoy the outdoors, especially fishing. Most people catch fish for fun, but there is a danger in the water that we can’t always see, smell or taste. That danger is mercury in fish.

-2-

Mercury is a basic chemical element that scientists classify as a metal, like iron or gold. However, when mercury gets into our air and water, it can be harmful. Eventually, mercury ends up in the fish that we eat—whether we caught the fish in the water, bought it from a store, or ordered it at a restaurant.

-3-

Most of the mercury that dirties or pollutes our air and water comes from coal mining and power plants that burn coal. Mercury can also be found in the household. Fluorescent lights that light our homes, thermometers and thermostats that measure heating and cooling all have mercury in them.

-4-

Why is mercury dangerous? For adults, too much mercury can damage kidneys or affect our central nervous system including the brain and spine.

-5-

1/ Written and produced by the Emergency & Community Health Outreach Collaborative (ECHO). All rights reserved. For information about ECHO visit www.echominnesota.org / February 2006

Pregnant mothers, breast-fed babies and young children are at most risk, because a small amount of mercury can cause damage to a growing brain. Too much mercury may affect a child's behavior and lead to learning problems later in life.

-6-

Eating fish is healthy for all ages, because it contains valuable protein, vitamins, minerals and oils. Unfortunately, mercury cannot be removed through cooking or cleaning the fish. However, you can take out other pollutants from the fish by cutting away the fat.

-7-

To reduce the amount of mercury that goes into your body, it is important to think about the type of fish you eat and how often you eat fish. Larger fish, older fish and fatty fish have higher amounts of pollutants. Fish that survive by eating other fish—like walleye, northern pike and bass—have the highest amounts of mercury in their meat. Just like us, when these fish eat food with mercury, it becomes a part of their bodies.

-8-

Another way to keep mercury from harming your health is to help reduce the amount of mercury that gets into our environment. Mercury is found in some common household items, such as thermometers, thermostats, and fluorescent lights. These should never be put into the trash. Most counties have special places called "household hazardous waste sites" where you can bring them and they will be disposed of properly.

-9-

Fluorescent lights use less energy so we save money on electric bills, but the bulbs also have mercury in them. So, when the fluorescent lights no longer work do not throw them in the trash, but take them to a county household hazardous waste site.

-10-

One of the best ways to keep mercury out of the home and the environment is not to buy goods made with mercury. Making choices to limit mercury in our diet and our environment improves our health and our community. The less mercury in our air and water, the more our lakes and rivers will be healthy and clean for everyone to enjoy!

WORD COUNT 511