

Drugs seeping into Lake Michigan

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Drugs are seeping into the Grand River and Lake Michigan from the Grand Rapids, Mich., sewage treatment plant, a study found.

Scientists found hormones from birth-control pills and anti-seizure medication, the Grand Rapids Press reported. They are more concerned about the effect the chemicals might have on fish and wildlife than on the risk to public health.

Amy Perbeck, a toxicologist with the state Department of Environmental Quality, said male fish elsewhere in the country have been found with female sexual organs.

"The fish are constantly exposed to hormones," Perbeck said.

The study is part of a campaign sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the American Pharmacists Association to educate the public on the proper disposal of drugs. Drugs flushed down the toilet are likely to end up first in sewage treatment plants and then in rivers and lakes.

Perbeck said drugs found in the tested samples were too diluted to be dangerous. She said, for example, someone would have to drink 17,000 gallons of water to ingest the amount of Ibuprofen in a single pill.

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