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Wisconsin Officials Concerned About Chemical Pollution In Fish

By JEFFERSON J. ALLEN
MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Chemical
pollution may be making some Wis-
consin fish unsafe to eat.
High levels of PCB's, or polychlorinated biphenyls, a toxic industrial chemical, are showing up in fish
in certain waters, health officials
warn.

No deaths have yet occurred in
Wisconsin from eating fish contain-
ing PCBs or any other toxic sub-
stance, said Jerry Mordahl, a
chemist for the State Department of
Agriculture, which monitors foods
produced and sold in the state.

But danger exists, warned Dr.
James Allen, a University of Wis-

consin pathologist.

Daily doses of PCBs over a month
of 2.5 parts per million—half the
level considered safe for
humans—have been fatal to mon-
keys, Allen said.

Studies indicate up to 30 per cent of
all Americans already have detecta-
ble levels of PCBs in their bodies, he

said.

Because PCBs accumulate in fatty
tissue, "There is a distinct possibility
that even at extremely low levels,
PCBs may eventually reach a toxic
level in man," Allen warned.

Allen said the PCB effects ob-
served in monkeys are similar to
symptoms reported in 1968 for 1,000

Japanese who accidentally ate
PCB-tainted rice oil. The effects in-
cluded acne, ulcers, jaundice, bloat-
ed faces, swollen joints and loss of
body hair. Because the PCBs were
retained in their fat, the symptoms
for many lingered for several years.
Babies born to affected women were
discolored and smaller than normal.

PCBs, which have been widely
used for almost 50 years in numerous
industrial products such as insulat-
ing and hydraulic fluids, paints, inks
and adhesives, have shown up in
other foods besides fish, said Donald
Heston, regional director of the U.S.
Food and Drug Administration.

Four years ago the FDA dis-
covered PCBs in food packaged in
paperboard made from recycled
carbonless copy paper. More
recently, milk from Michigan and
Ohio was contaminated when dairy
herds are feed stored in silos coated
with paint containing PCBs, he said.

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