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High-energy electrons may help destroy PCBs

Details of a new method for destroying polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) will be outlined this week at a meeting of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers at New York's Americana Hotel. The technique, developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, involves spraying a thin moving sheet of water or sewage with high-energy electrons. The radiation breaks down water molecules into free radicals, which in turn break down the PCB molecules. While other types of radiation would have the same effect, the MIT researchers say the use of high-energy electrons offers maximum economies, safety and controllability. Canada Centre for Inland Waters (Burlington, Ont.) has been developing bacterial treatment methods (*CW, Feb. 25, 1976, p. 47*).

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