



Hg²⁺ sticks to algae in surface waters. The algae sink and waiting microbes eat them and in the process convert the mercury to toxic **methylmercury** CH₃Hg.

CH₃Hg is passed along the food chain via a process known as **biomagnification**. The algae are eaten by zooplankton (krill) which are eaten by small fish, which are eaten by bigger fish - at each step CH₃Hg becomes more **concentrated** reaching dangerous levels in top predators such as whales, seals, polar bears and people.

Organisms can accumulate high concentration of mercury over time. In a process known as **bioaccumulation**. This occurs when organisms take up mercury at a faster rate than they can remove it.