

POLLUTION



Fish Pharm
 These pills represent the relative amounts of four pharmaceutical drugs found in fish pulled from Chicago's North Shore Channel and tested by Baylor scientists.

*PERCENTAGES EXCEED 100 BECAUSE OF ROUNDING. BLUE ANTIHISTAMINE PILLS (TOP) ARE NOT INCLUDED IN PERCENTAGES. ART: OLIVER UBERTI, NG STAFF. PHOTO: REBECCA HALE, NG STAFF. SOURCE: ALEJANDRO RAMIREZ, BAYLOR UNIVERSITY.

The traditional foe of water quality is waste from factories and farms, but now environmental regulators are eyeing a new pollution source: our medicine chests. Fish caught downstream from sewage treatment plants in five U.S. cities contained traces of pharmaceuticals and toiletries, Baylor University researchers found in a recent study. You'd have to eat tons of fish for such small concentrations to affect human health, but the products could pose a threat to marine life. To assess the risk, the EPA has expanded monitoring to 150 sites, with results due in 2011.