

**TABLE 17.1 Time course of insights into methylmercury toxicity and related interventions**

Year	Event
1866	First published record of fatal occupational methylmercury poisoning
1887	First experimental studies on methylmercury toxicity
1940–1954	Poisoning cases in workers at fungicide production plants
1952	First report on developmental neurotoxicity in two infants
1956	Discovery of a disease of unknown origin in Minamata, Japan
1963	First official recognition of methylmercury as cause of Minamata disease
1955–1972	Poisoning epidemics from use of methylmercury-treated seed grain for cooking
1967	Demonstration of mercury methylation in sediments
1972	Experimental study of delayed effects due to developmental neurotoxicity
1973	Dose–response relationship described in poisoned adults in Iraq
1978	Exposure limit of 3.3 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ per week based on toxicity in adults
1986	First report on adverse effects in children related to maternal fish intake during pregnancy
1997	Population study shows adverse effects in children from methylmercury in maternal seafood intake
1998	White House expert workshop identifies uncertainties in evidence
2000	National Research Council (U.S.) supports exposure limit of 0.1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ per day
2003	Updated international exposure limit of 1.6 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ per week
2004	European expert committee recommends that exposures be “minimized”
2009	International agreement on controlling mercury pollution