Objective

- To study how microbial generation of toxic mercury is influenced by the surrounding environment.

New Science

- Study shows that wetland vegetation influences how mercury toxicity is regulated in the Great Lakes region.
- Provides evidence that this environmental regulation may be due to enhanced microbial activity associated with plant-derived organic matter, as well as differences in microbiome composition of understudied organisms.

Significance

- This research shows the potential of poorly understood fermenting microorganisms to generate methylmercury.
- Provides a foundation for future work targeting these understudied organisms.

Vegetated wetland sites lead to much higher methylmercury production than unvegetated sites but unvegetated sites are much more susceptible to disturbance-induced methylation.