

# Contaminants in Inuit Nunangat

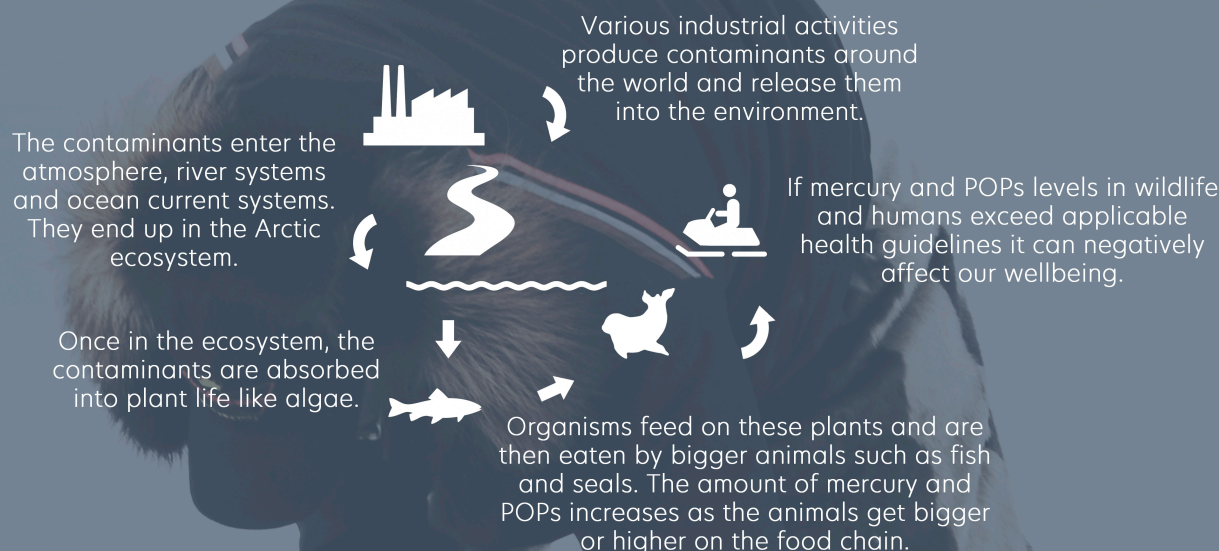
## What are contaminants?

Contaminants are substances that pollute the environment and degrade the health of the ecosystem.

In the Arctic, contaminants of particular concern are mercury and persistent organic pollutants (POPs)

**Mercury** is an element that naturally occurs in the environment. It is released into the atmosphere through activities like burning coal and small scale gold mining.

**POPs** are persistent organic pollutants. They are found in chemicals used for pesticides, flame retardants, and used to be in refrigerator coolants.



We need to be careful to balance the **risks** of contaminants with the **benefits** of country foods rich in nutrients and vitamins

## Current status of contaminants in the Arctic

For the most part, contaminant levels are static or even reducing. In most areas of Inuit Nunangat the Inuit population are below Health Canada Guidelines for mercury and POPs levels. There are some additional warnings for women of childbearing age and an advisory for eating **Ringed Seal liver** for this group is in effect.

It is important that international action continues to advocate for the reduction and elimination of mercury and POPs to secure the health and wellness of our wildlife and Arctic communities.

