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- [Northwest](#)
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- [Features](#)
- [Living](#)
- [Special Sections](#)
- [Weekend](#)
- [Movie Listings](#)
- [Outdoors](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Technology](#)
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- [Horoscope](#)
- [For The Record](#)
- [Lottery](#)
- [Commuter Watch](#)

Microchip would alert authorities of water poisoning  
 GANNETT NEWS SERVICE

Researchers in upstate New York are developing a microchip that immediately would alert authorities when biological and chemical contaminants are dumped into a drinking water supply.

If nerve agents or disease-causing bacteria were introduced into a reservoir, the dime-sized computer chip would measure the disruptions caused by the particles in a laser beam passed through the water. The microchips are expected to be on the market next year and available for commercial applications, such as protecting New York City's water supply -- which provides water for most of Westchester and part of Putnam counties.

"It was literally after Sept. 11 that we felt the need to develop sensors that would be effective in detecting chemical and biological agents in real time," said Cornelius B. Murphy, Jr., president of the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. "We developed this approach toward monitoring uncovered reservoirs that weren't amenable to being fenced in or covered."

The school in Syracuse has teamed with O'Brien and Gere Engineers, a nationwide firm with headquarters in Syracuse, and Illumination Technologies of East Syracuse, an optical instrumentation company.

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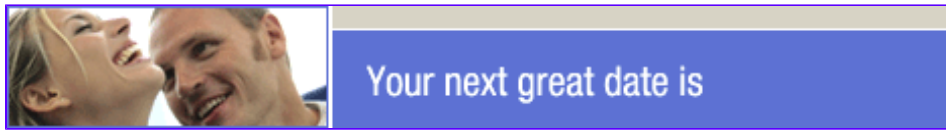
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