



MERCURY



HOW CAN MERCURY AFFECT HUMAN HEALTH?

Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that can damage the nervous system including the brain, kidneys and liver. Infants, children, and pregnant women are most vulnerable to the negative health effects of mercury. Mercury can be passed to the fetus during pregnancy, and to newborns through breastmilk.

Harmful effects include blindness, seizures, brain damage, and inability to speak. Children may develop problems affecting their nervous and digestive systems and could suffer kidney damage.



HOW CAN I REDUCE MY EXPOSURE TO MERCURY IN PRODUCTS?

- Use digital thermometers; do not use mercury thermometers.
- Take used batteries, mercury thermometers, fluorescent light bulbs, and other mercury-containing products to a hazardous waste facility.
- If there is a mercury spill, immediately contact your health department for cleanup instructions and resources.
- Never use a vacuum cleaner or broom to clean up a mercury spill. Use card-board or an eyedropper to gather mercury beads. Always wear gloves.
- Never pour mercury down a drain.

HOW CAN I REDUCE EXPOSURE TO MERCURY IN FOOD?

Fish and other Seafood can play an important role in a healthy diet. They are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids which can prevent heart disease and help healthy brain development in children.

Mercury pollution from industry and power plants can reach our lakes, streams, rivers and oceans and can end up in the fish caught there.

Children should consume a wide variety of low mercury fish including: Atlantic Mackerel, Freshwater Coho Salmon (farmed in tank systems, from the U.S.), Pacific Sardines (wild-caught) and Salmon (wild-caught, from Alaska).

Children's portions should be smaller than adults ones. One serving might be 1–2 ounces for a toddler, but 2–3 ounces for an older, larger child.

Avoid these fish--highest mercury levels: Swordfish, Shark King Mackerel, Gulf Tilefish, Marlin and Orange Roughy

If you eat locally-caught fish, check with your health or environment department regarding fish advisories.



HOW DO I PROPERLY DISPOSE OF A MERCURY THERMOMETER?

Once a mercury-free replacement has been purchased, it is important to dispose of the old thermometer safely. Do not throw the old mercury thermometer in the garbage. Garbage is either incinerated or land filled. In either case, the mercury will make its way into the environment through air emissions or water contamination. This mercury will then affect many living things, including humans.

Bring your mercury thermometer to a household hazardous waste collection facility. Many state or local agencies operate these facilities as permanent or seasonal collections. Typically, the service is free.

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