

## For your protection

Use alternatives as much as possible such as: digital thermometers, sphygmomanometers etc

Do not dispose damaged or obsolete Mercury based appliances (CFLs, batteries etc) into the domestic waste stream

Use safely in school laboratories

If you use mercury, keep it sealed from the air never take it out of the container

## Clean up small mercury spills ...

Do not use a vacuum cleaner, broom or mop.

Do not touch; keep children and pets away from the area. Ventilate the area.

Remove gold jewelry and wrist watches you are wearing. Put on gloves and masks.

Use the cardboard or squeegee to collect the Mercury beads. Use a flashlight to make the area visible.

Using a dropper, collect the beads into a damp paper towel and put into a plastic container.

Use a sticky tape to collect the remaining beads.



# Protect Your Family From Hg Exposure

**Mercury is a global contaminant. It does not break down in the environment and can build up in living cells. In its vapour form, Mercury can be carried long distances on wind currents and staying in the atmosphere for long periods of time.**



## Mercury exists in three different forms

1. **Elemental mercury** - this silvery, shiny, volatile liquid gives off a colourless, odourless vapour at room temperature
2. **Inorganic mercury** - compounds formed when elemental mercury combines with other elements such as sulphur, chlorine or oxygen to create compounds known as mercury salts.
3. **Organic mercury** - compounds, such as methyl mercury, are formed when elemental mercury combines with carbon



## Sources

Mercury comes from a range of natural sources such as volcanoes, soils, undersea vents, mercury-rich geological zones and forest fires etc. Human activities such as coal power plants, gold production, production of non-ferrous metals, caustic soda production, and disposal of wastes increase the addition of Mercury to the environment.

## Uses

Use in barometers and manometers due to its high density

Use mercury metal as a liquid electrode in the manufacture of chlorine and sodium hydroxide by electrolysis of brine

Use in medical equipments such as thermometers, sphygmomanometers, esophageal dilators etc

Also as insecticides, disinfectants, pigments, fluorescent light bulbs, electric batteries,



## Causes of Mercury Poisoning

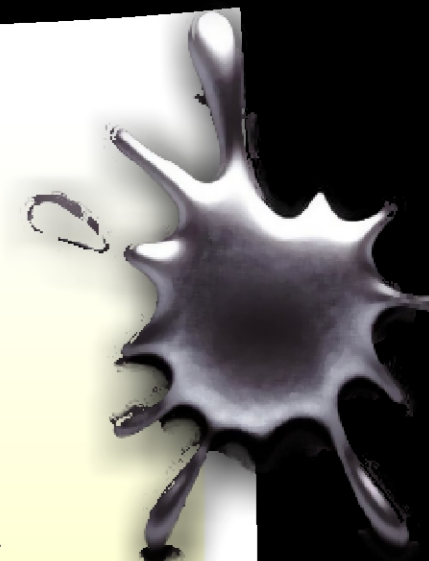
**Mercury poisoning can be caused by any number of methods of exposure:**

Eating fish that contaminated with mercury

Amalgam dental fillings

Industrial and work place exposures such as, hospitals and industries

Cosmetics



## Health Effects

The mercury in these devices is trapped and usually does not cause any health problems. Symptoms usually begin with cough, chest tightness, trouble breathing and upset stomach. This may go on to pneumonia which can be fatal.

Methyl mercury, which is soluble in water, is assimilated in high concentrations by many fishes and shellfishes.

Mental disorders, nervous damages, digestive disorders, reproductive disorders and kidney failures are some symptoms of short-term exposure to high concentrations of mercury vapour.

Mercury can cause permanent damage to your brain and central nervous system, resulting in behavioral or learning problems

