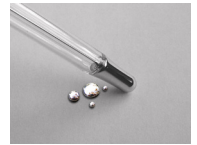


Mercury & Your Family's Health



How can you and your family be exposed to mercury?

Mercury comes in many forms. You can see some forms of mercury, like the silver liquid that may be found in some thermometers and other items around your home. This mercury is known as *metallic mercury*.



Other forms of mercury you can't see, like the kind in certain types of fish that you eat. This type of mercury is called *methylmercury*. But fish can be a healthy food option. Visit www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish to learn more about the mercury in fish.



Both forms of mercury are bad for your health.



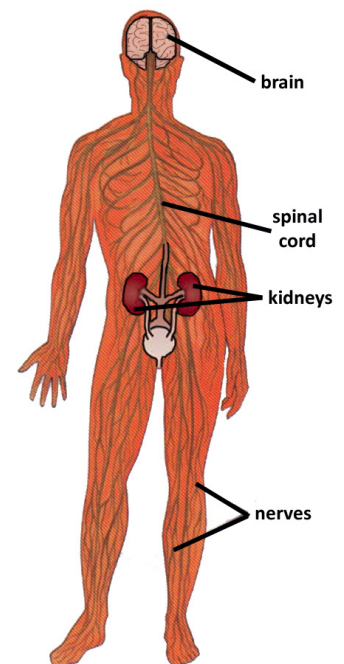
Why worry about mercury?

Many adults played with mercury when they were kids. The dangers of mercury weren't really understood then. Now scientists understand how toxic mercury is – especially for children and unborn babies.

You can get sick from mercury if you eat too many meals of fish that have methylmercury in them or if you breathe in a lot of the mercury vapor that comes from metallic mercury.

Mercury can cause damage to your brain and nervous system, as well as your kidneys. If you're pregnant, it can harm the development of your unborn baby.

Even a small amount of mercury can be harmful to the health of children because their bodies are small.



This is why children and pregnant women should be careful about how much fish they eat and never play with metallic mercury or be around a place where metallic mercury has spilled. Even if you can't see any metallic mercury, mercury vapors may still be in the air.

Health Effects of Mercury

Being around high levels mercury vapors for a long time can cause:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• irritability• shyness• tremors• changes in vision or hearing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• memory problems• lung damage• nausea• vomiting• diarrhea | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• increases in blood pressure or heart rate• skin rashes• eye irritation |
|---|--|--|

* Note: Other conditions can cause these symptoms too.

If you think you have been exposed...

If you have been around mercury and are worried about your health, please call your doctor.

You can also call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. The Poison Control Center's medical staff are available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week and can answer questions about mercury and your health.



Make your home a mercury free zone!

Protect your family and make your home a mercury free zone. You may be surprised to learn of the many things in your home that could have mercury in them.

Use the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services fact sheet, "Is Your Home Mercury Free?" to find the things in your home that can be replaced with safer options.



The fact sheet, "Get Rid of Mercury Safely," explains how to package and transport any mercury-containing items you may find.

Want to learn more?

Contact the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services at **1-800-648-6942** or visit www.michigan.gov/mercury for these other fact sheets:

- **Mercury Spill Quick Guide**
- **How to Clean Up Spilled Mercury**
- **Mercury Spills - Hiring a Cleanup Contractor**
- **Mercury Spills & Your Pet**
- **Is Your Home Mercury Free?**
- **Get Rid of Mercury Safely**

