



Women's Voices for the Earth

Mercury-Containing Products: Recycle for a Healthy Future



Mercury products represent more than **2,000 tons of mercury in the environment** or 25 percent of the total national mercury reservoir! The EPA estimates that coal combustion is the most significant contributor to air emissions of mercury at 48 tons per year, and products containing mercury contribute 22-29 tons to air! (Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2002). Use and Release of Mercury in the United States. EPA/600/R-02/104. Dec. 2002. <http://www.epa.gov/ORD/NRMRL/pubs/600r02104/600r02104.htm>)

What Products Contain Mercury?

Household products that may contain mercury include round thermostats, thermometers, blood pressure gauges, even your child's shoes with the blinking lights! Unsafe handling and improper disposal of these products has the potential to contaminate water quality and the fish that inhabit those waters. Humans eat the fish that absorb mercury, so we too are at risk—especially women.

Why Should I be Concerned about Mercury?

Mercury is a dangerous neurotoxin that has been linked to learning disabilities and developmental delays in children and can damage the heart, nervous system, or kidneys of adults. Mercury transfers from women to fetuses across the placenta and to infants through breastfeeding. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, **6 percent of women of childbearing age already have mercury in their bodies at levels of concern for a developing baby.**



What can I do?

You can help prevent mercury pollution by starting right at home!

- Avoid using products that contain mercury whenever possible
- Recycle products that you can't avoid using

For suggestions on alternatives products and for a list of existing recycling opportunities, visit Women's Voices for the Earth at www.womenandenvironment.org