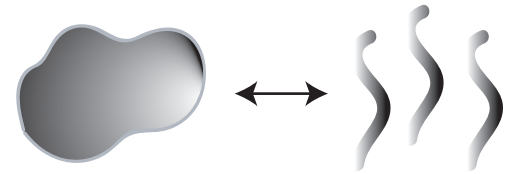


MERCURY EXPOSURE

WHAT IS ELEMENTAL MERCURY?

Elemental mercury is a silver, odorless, liquid at room temperature. The hotter it gets, the more it evaporates into a colorless, odorless gas.

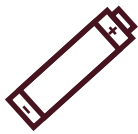
You can be exposed to mercury by absorbing it through your skin or breathing it in.



Mercury can be found in:



Fluorescent light bulbs



Batteries



Switches and Thermostats



Laboratories



Industrial and Electronic waste



Dental amalgam

WHO IS AT RISK FOR EXPOSURE?

Miners
Dental staff
Hospital staff
Factory workers
Instrument repair technicians

Oil and gas workers
Construction workers
Demolition and recycling workers
Laboratory workers

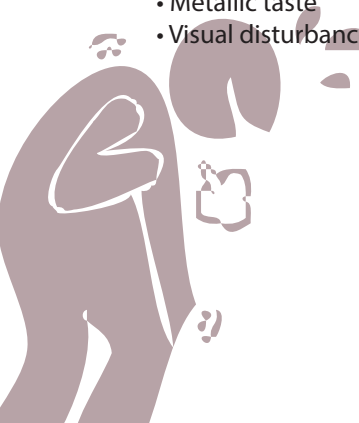


Fish and shellfish often contain small amounts of mercury. For most people this is not a concern. However, pregnant women and small children should limit fish intake, and especially stay away from shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish.

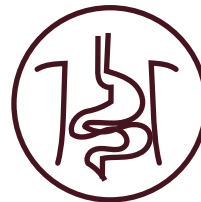
WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF MERCURY EXPOSURE?

Symptoms of short-term high exposure include:

- Coughing and wheezing
- Chills and fever
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea and vomiting
- Headache
- High blood pressure and irregular heartbeat
- Metallic taste
- Visual disturbance



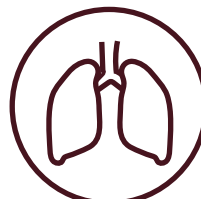
Gastrointestinal tract



Brain and Nerves



Long-term exposure to mercury can damage:



Lungs



Kidneys

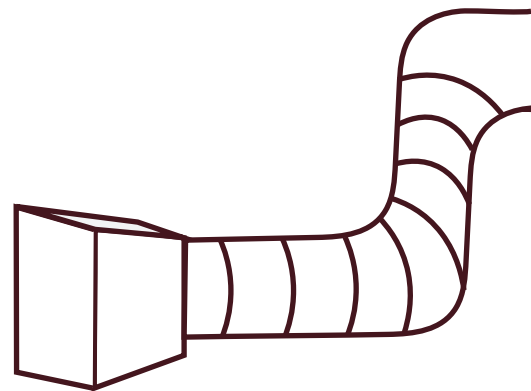


Cardiovascular function

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM MERCURY?

YOUR EMPLOYER SHOULD:

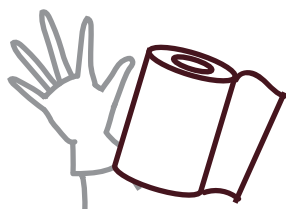
- Eliminate or substitute mercury products when possible.
- Provide facilities to change clothes and wash off mercury.
- Ensure ventilation and monitor air for mercury.
- Provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Train workers on how to use products that contain mercury and how to use PPE.



YOU SHOULD:

Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Wear gloves, a respirator, and other protective clothing when applicable. An industrial hygienist can fit test you for appropriate PPE. You must first be medically cleared to use a respirator.



Report Any Safety Hazards

- If you see any mercury spills, clean up the spill if you are trained to do so and/or report it immediately. Leave the area until the spill can be cleaned.
- If you see anything that might increase your risk of mercury exposure, let your supervisor know.

Not Bring Mercury Home

- Always wash your hands before you eat or touch your face.
- Shower and change your clothes at the end of the work day.



WHAT IF I HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO MERCURY?

If you have been in an enclosed area where mercury has been heated, remove yourself from the exposure immediately. If mercury gets on the skin, wash the area to prevent further exposure. If you notice any of these symptoms any time within hours to days of mercury exposure, seek medical care.

If you are exposed to mercury at your job, an occupational health specialist can provide a medical evaluation and may refer you to an industrial hygienist who can assess your situation or worksite and provide tips on ways to decrease risk of future injury and/or illness.



Occupational health physicians are doctors who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of work-related injuries and illnesses.



Mount Sinai *Selikoff Centers for Occupational Health*

To learn more, contact us at 888-702-0630 or visit us at www.mountsinai.org/selikoff



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This information is intended for general reference only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice.