

The City of Ashland

Methylmercury Reduction Program

Mercury in fish is a serious problem. It is the main exposure pathway for people. Reducing the amount of mercury in fish is complicated. Mercury gets into water from many sources. However, one way to control it is for households to keep mercury from going in the trash, on the ground or down the drain.

Mercury accumulates in the body over time. It can permanently affect fetal and child development and can damage the brain, kidneys, and lungs.

Mercury is a serious matter.



US EPA Region 10

For more information from US EPA about mercury, scan these QR codes.

General information



Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs



Guidelines for Eating Fish



What Products Might Contain Mercury ?

Antiques
Appliances
Automotive Parts
Barometers
Batteries
Dental Amalgam
Electronics
Jewelry
Light Bulbs (CFL and tube style, UV)
Medical Equipment
Old Chemistry Kits
Sporting Equipment
Thermometers
Thermostats



This product was developed by Jacobs' Premier Group

What Should be Done?

1—Identify and properly dispose of mercury-containing items. **DO NOT** throw it in the trash or down the drain. There are county Household Hazardous Waste collections throughout Oregon.

The Department of Environmental Quality has more information.



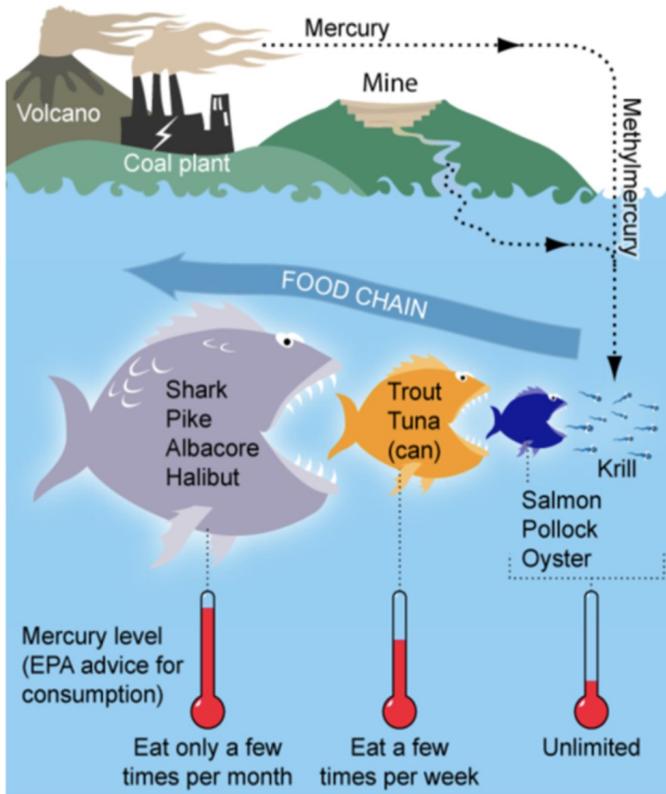
2—Don't buy new items that contain mercury. Use LED lightbulbs instead of Compact Fluorescent (CFL). If you have an old thermostat, thermometer or other product with mercury in it, buy a new non-mercury item to replace it.

3— If mercury spills, follow instructions for safe clean-up and disposal.



This brochure is intended for household use only. There are different requirements for recycling and disposal of mercury that apply to business and industry.

Keeping Mercury Out of Waterways is Critical



Basic diagram of how Mercury bioaccumulates and biomagnifies within a marine food chain, Wikimedia commons

If you can see a silver opaque liquid inside a fever thermometer, barometer, or thermostat, it likely contains mercury. Replace these items with new digital products and properly dispose of the old equipment.

Methylmercury

How are people exposed?

Mercury released to the environment is usually elemental (inorganic). In waterways, it is converted by bacteria to a methylated (organic) form that is toxic. In this form, the mercury is taken up in the food chain, where more and more of it accumulates in large animals at the top of the food chain. Most human exposure comes from eating those large fish, especially in a coastal region such as the Pacific Northwest.

Why is it bad?

Methylmercury is toxic at high levels. At lower levels, it can affect brain development in babies and children.

When elemental mercury is sealed up in a device, it's not a problem. The risk comes in when that device breaks and its contents are spilled. The City of Ashland is encouraging residents to pro-actively replace mercury-containing products to reduce the risk of spills or improper disposal.

What to do?

First: check out fish consumption advisories published by the



Oregon Health Authority. Fish is a great part of a healthy eating program, but it is important to balance the potential for mercury exposure.

Second: identify, replace, and properly dispose of any mercury-containing products. See the list on the back of this brochure for items that may contain mercury.

Keeping our waterways clean

Keeping elemental mercury from getting into the environment is the key. Broken mercury-containing devices such as a thermometer can contaminate the ground. If it is flushed down a drain, some of the mercury may get to waterways.

Benefit?

Our goal is to prevent people from being exposed to, and affected by, methylmercury.



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