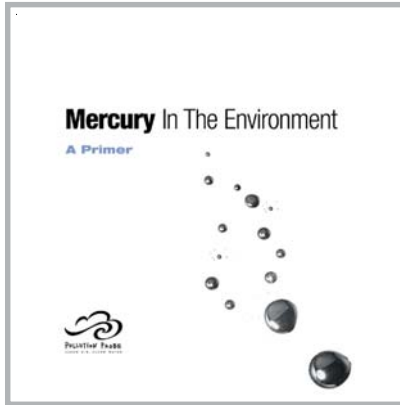


The information provided in this brochure
is taken from the

Mercury in the Environment: A Primer



Copies of the Primer are available at
[www.pollutionprobe.org/Publications/
Primers.htm](http://www.pollutionprobe.org/Publications/Primers.htm)

or

contact us at info@pollutionprobe.org
or (416) 926-1907

Five Easy Things You Can Do to Help Prevent Mercury Pollution and Protect Yourself



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CLEAN AIR. CLEAN WATER.

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the **Ontario Trillium Foundation**, an agency of the
Government of Ontario, for its generous support of
Pollution Probe's Mercury project.

1 Buy Mercury-Free

- Choose products that do not contain mercury. Look for digital thermometers and electronic thermostats. Ask store staff to assist you or contact the manufacturer's toll-free number.
- Ask your dentist if he or she will employ mercury-free composites for any dental work, and enquire if your insurance company will pay for the mercury-free materials (if not, speak with your employer or insurance company).
- Ask your local pharmacy or hardware store to consider phasing-out the sale of mercury-containing products.

2 Discard Products Safely

- Separate mercury-containing products, such as compact fluorescent light bulbs (newer bulbs), thermometers, thermostats, old paint (pre-1991) and batteries (pre-1995) from regular garbage.
- Do not remove mercury switches from products, such as thermostats; it is safer to keep or recycle the product when it is intact.
- Take any mercury-containing products that you have collected to your local household hazardous waste depot. Call your local municipality for information on where to bring mercury-containing waste. Be careful to ensure that the materials are well protected from breakage.
- Dead light bulbs can be returned to some retailers (Home Depot and Rona) for proper disposal.

3 Conserve Energy

- Burning coal for power releases mercury to the air. Conserve energy by turning the heat back and using air conditioning only when necessary. An electronic programmable thermostat can help do this for you.
- Purchase only energy-efficient products, such as compact fluorescent lights (instead of bulbs). Even though fluorescents contain a small amount of mercury, they will help reduce energy use and related pollution.
- Ensure your home is properly sealed and well insulated.

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4 Avoid Exposure to Mercury at Home, School and Work

- Never play with liquid mercury. If you come into contact with liquid mercury, wash the affected area immediately.
- Do not vacuum liquid mercury spills. If mercury spills in your home or property, air out the room for a few minutes before carefully collecting the mercury using a damp paper towel and placing the mercury and all contaminated waste in a sealed container. Contact your local pollution control agency if the spill is serious or if you are unable to collect or contain the mercury.
- Notify your employer or school official if you see stored or spilled mercury.

5 Be Aware of Mercury in Fish

- Pregnant women, breastfeeding women and children (under 15) should never consume large ocean fish, especially fresh tuna, shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tile fish. Other fish species should be consumed in moderation.
- If you consume freshwater fish frequently, you should know the local fish advisory guidelines and follow them carefully. Pregnant women, breastfeeding women and children (under 15) should avoid large freshwater fish, especially pike, walleye (pickerel), largemouth bass and muskellunge. As a general rule, smaller fish are safer to eat.
- Continue to eat fish, while following health guidelines and fish advisories. Catfish (farmed), haddock, trout (farmed), salmon (wild pacific) and flounder are examples of fish that typically have lower mercury levels (www.schs.state.nc.us/epi/fish/whatfisharesafe.pdf).