



Mercury hides in many places. Circle items that might contain mercury in this picture. (hint: there are 12 items.)

Many household items may contain mercury. If these items get broken or thrown in the trash, the mercury can be dangerous to you and your family. Learn the facts about mercury. Call your county's solid waste management district for a free brochure and the location of the nearest mercury recycling center.



Dear teacher,

Thank you for including the Mercury Awareness Program in your lessons. Children are especially susceptible to mercury poisoning and need to learn to stay away from mercury. These common household items may contain mercury and as such need to be handled with care and properly disposed of at the end of their useful lives. As shown, these products (except the skin antiseptics) do not pose a threat to human health or the environment. It is only upon release of the mercury in these products that the threat becomes active.

If you have further questions about mercury or the Mercury Awareness Program and for more information about how your school can join the Mercury Reduction and Recycling Pledge Program, talk to your county's solid waste management district or the Regional Household Hazardous Waste Task Force at 812/332-2791.

The 12 mercury containing items in the picture are:

Items 1 and 2: *Paint cans.* Latex paint that was manufactured before 1990 contains a small amount of mercury. The mercury was added as a fungicide and to protect the paint from mildew. Some marine paints still contain mercury. Check the ingredients on the label.

Items 3 and 4: *Batteries.* Most major brand alkaline batteries no longer contain mercury. But batteries manufactured outside of the United States and Europe may still contain mercury. Almost all button cell batteries, used in watches and calculators, contain mercury.

Item 5: *Maze Game.* Old maze games and labyrinth games used mercury as the "ball" that had to go through the maze.

Item 6: *Clothes Iron.* Irons with safety features such as the auto tilt shut off contain mercury. The mercury switch makes the electrical connection when upright and breaks the connection when the iron tips over.

Item 7: *Thermostat.* One of the most common household items containing mercury is the thermostat, round or rectangular. New digital and programmable thermostats are energy savers and do not contain mercury.

Items 8 and 9: *Fluorescent bulbs.* All fluorescent lamps contain mercury. These lamps are a great source of energy efficient lighting, but they need to be handled carefully so as not to break them. When broken, mercury is released to the air.

Item 10: *Thermometer.* The most common mercury containing household item. Replace it before it breaks. Even small spills from thermometers need to be properly cleaned up. Digital thermometers work just as well.

Item 11: *Merthiolate and/or Mercurichrome skin antiseptic®.* Often found in the medicine cabinet for cuts and scrapes. Both contain mercury. Use substitute antibacterial ointments.

Item 12: *Blood pressure gauge.* Some gauges contain mercury, although the digital types do not.