

# mercury and your health

Mercury is a **toxic** element which can potentially lead to serious health effects

**You may be exposed through:**



Breakage, leakage or improper disposal of mercury-added products



Using mercury-added skin-lightening creams and other cosmetics



Breakage and spillage of mercury devices at your workplace (laboratories/hospitals/dental offices/artisanal small scale gold mining)



Regularly consuming fish with high levels of mercury

## Possible health effects



- Neurological disorders
- Behavioural disorders
- Memory loss
- Tremors
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Muscle weakness
- Learning disabilities

**Fetuses and children are at highest risk** when exposed to mercury because their nervous systems are **still developing**

## Organs impacted by mercury exposure



Fish and Seafood with high levels of mercury



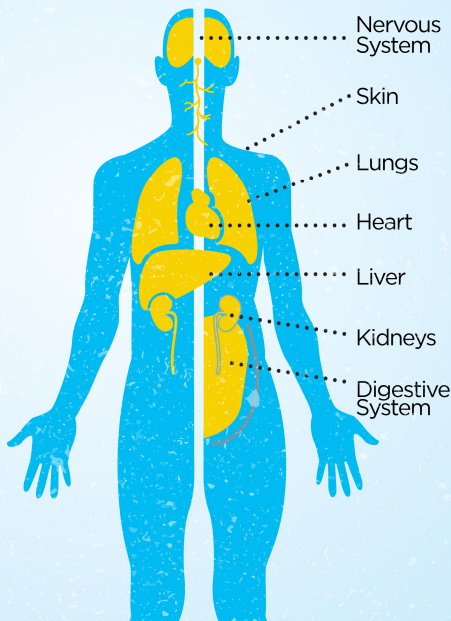
Some skin-lightening creams



Some small scale gold mining practices



Broken mercury-containing devices



Nervous System

Skin

Lungs

Heart

Liver

Kidneys

Digestive System



Use mercury-free alternatives, like LED lightbulbs and digital thermometers



Check labels on skin-lightening creams and soaps. Be aware that many of these products are mislabelled and mercury is not always listed as an ingredient

## what can you do?



Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment, if your job may expose you to mercury



Reduce the frequency of consumption of large predatory fish species which are known to contain higher levels of mercury



The Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Caribbean (BCRC-Caribbean)

Developed under the project "Development of Minamata Initial Assessment for the Caribbean (Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago)

For more information, visit the Global Mercury Partnership website and [www.bcrc-caribbean.org](http://www.bcrc-caribbean.org)