

Effects of mercury on the environment

[Science](#), [Astrology](#)



LA Gear and other shoe companies have been using mercury to make the switch active in their shoe that light up when a person walks. The shoes should return to the company after the user is done with the to be recycled. Since LA never advertises this, people just thrown them away like any other pair of old shoes. Eventually the shoes end up in a land fill and the mercury can leak out into the environment. Mercury is a highly toxic substance and is the cause of the Minamata Disease in the 1950's. On the top 20 toxic chemical list, mercury rates 3rd.

Mercury bioaccumulates in the body and has difficulty eliminating it. It may reach dangerous levels over time and causes sever damage to the central nervous system. Mercury's Effect on the Environment and People Mercury is one of the biggest environmental problems that exist because it is hard to get of once in the environment. In the past, mercury was used to make things like paper, put in paint and thermometers, and as an agricultural pesticide. The Minamata Disease is a good example of what could happen if mercury enters into the environment.

In the mid 1950's, more than 100 Japanese were poisoned by fish that contained methyl mercury. The mercury came from industrial waste that had been dumped into the bay where the fish were caught. The mercury bioaccumulated up the foodchain. The cats the were eating the fish showed the symptoms first. They began to act very strange; running into walls and acting like they were " in a trance. " The people in the village developed mental retardation, insanity, and birth defects from eating the poisoned fish.

Fifty people died and 150 people suffered from these disorders. Another example of mercury's effect on people and the environment comes from the saying "mad as a hatter." In the 1800's, hats were made with mercury to stiffen the brim. The hatters that made the hats worked with mercury all the time. The mercury was absorbed into their skin and caused them to develop neurological and physiological disorders. People just assumed they were going crazy. From then on, when someone thought another was going out of their mind they would say they were "mad as a hatter."