

# why worry

# about mercury thermometers?



**Mercury is a toxic pollutant** that can severely effect the central nervous system, impair hearing and speech, and cause blindness, paralysis or even death.

People are most commonly exposed to mercury by way of broken fever thermometers. A typical thermometer contains about a gram of mercury – enough to pollute a 20 acre lake!

Because thermometers are usually stored and used in the bathroom, when they break the mercury often gets washed down the drain. Unfortunately, mercury does not get removed in the wastewater treatment process.

## What can you do?

Because mercury can contaminate the air, soil and water when a thermometer breaks, old-fashioned mercury thermometers should never be disposed of in the trash. To reduce the risk of mercury contamination and protect community health, the Napa Sanitation District will replace your old thermometer with a new digital one that does not contain mercury.

## How can I exchange my thermometer?

You can pick up a new digital thermometer at the Napa Sanitation District office, located at 935 Hartle Court in Napa. We're open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Be sure to bring your mercury thermometer with you to exchange – we'll dispose of it properly.

You can also drop off mercury-containing thermometers at the Napa-Vallejo Hazardous Waste Collection Facility located at 899 A Devlin Road, American Canyon.

## What do I do if my thermometer breaks?

If a mercury thermometer breaks, care must be taken to capture all the spilled mercury. NEVER use a vacuum cleaner to clean up the mercury—it can create tiny droplets in the air and make the problem worse. Secure the area from children and pets, open windows, and then follow the clean-up instructions at: <http://www.epa.gov/hg/spills/#thermometer>



**For more information about the thermometer exchange program or reducing mercury pollution, please contact:**

Napa Sanitation District  
(707) 258-6000, ext. 502

napa sanitation district

Clean water. Healthy community.