HEAVY METALS
LEAD

► What is lead?
● Lead has been taken out of the earth and used in paint, plastics and crystal to make them look nicer, or last longer.

► What is lead poisoning?
● Lead poisoning happens when lead gets into your body.
● A blood lead level at or above 10 µg/dL means that someone is lead poisoned.
● ALL CHILDREN IN DETROIT ARE AT RISK OF GETTING LEAD POISONING.

► What happens if a child is lead poisoned?
♦ slowed growth  ♦ hearing loss  ♦ learning problems  ♦ behavior problems

► Where is lead found in and around your home?
● In houses built before 1978 that have cracking and peeling paint
● Bare soil around old homes and next to freeways
● Toys made outside the United States
● Old painted furniture
● In water coming from old pipes

► What should you do if you think you have lead in your home?
● If your child is less than 6 years old, have him or her tested for lead poisoning once a year.
● If you rent, tell the landlord about chipping or peeling paint.
● Run your water for 2 minutes before using.
● Never use hot water from the tap.
● Have your child wash his /her hands often, especially before eating.
● Keep your home dust free by damp mopping with sudsy detergents at least once a week.
● Plant grass to cover bare spots in the yard.
● Wash toys and pacifiers often.
● Don’t let children play with toys made in other countries.
● Have your child eat healthy low fat and high calcium meals and snacks.

► Did you know?
● Lead poisoning is a very common health problem for young children.
● Lead tastes sweet, which makes a child want to eat more of it.
● Children under the age of 3 are at highest risk, because they crawl or play on the ground.
● Children may get free lead testing at some city health departments.
What is mercury (also known as quicksilver)?
- It is a silvery metal that is used in dental fillings, batteries, thermometers, skin lightening creams, industry, and farming.

What is mercury poisoning?
- Poisoning happens when mercury gets into the body by breathing in its fumes, or eating foods, like fish, that come from water containing mercury.
- A blood level at or above .02 ppm (parts per million), means that someone has mercury poisoning, and should see a doctor right away.

What happens if someone is poisoned by mercury?
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Rashes
- Vomiting
- Mouth sores
- Hearing problem
- Blistering
- Peeling of hands and feet
- Kidney and brain damage

Where is mercury found in and around your home?
- In some thermometers
- Batteries
- Some children’s sneakers
- Some fish from Michigan’s lakes and rivers
- Fluorescent bulbs

What should you do if mercury is spilled in your home or if you eat fish from Michigan’s lakes and rivers?
- Keep everyone away from the area where the mercury was spilled
- Close off the room from the rest of the house
- Let fresh air in by opening windows
- Do not let mercury get on skin or clothes
- For small spills (less than a tablespoon) pick up the mercury with an eye dropper, or scoop it up with a piece of paper or cardboard, place in a water-tight bag, and call your local health department for information on disposal
- Report all mercury spills to your local county health department, and poison control center
- Women of childbearing age and children under 15 should not eat more than one meal a month of fish caught in Michigan’s lakes and rivers.

Did you know?
- Mercury spills can be a health problem for many months or years, because mercury is hard to remove from clothes, furniture, carpeted floors and walls.
- Mercury is heavier than water, so if you pour it down your drain, it may build up and give off harmful vapors from your sink.