

# Compact Fluorescent (CF) Energy Saving Light Bulbs: Serious Health Hazard Due to Mercury Content

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Global Research, April 20, 2015

[Natural News](#) 10 February 2011

Theme: [Environment](#), [Science and Medicine](#)

*If broken indoors, compact fluorescent (CF) light bulbs release 20 times the maximum acceptable mercury concentration into the air, according to a study conducted by researchers from the Fraunhofer Wilhelm Klauditz Institute for German's Federal Environment Agency.*

CF bulbs use only 20 percent as much energy as traditional incandescent bulbs and have become highly popular among consumers seeking to reduce both their energy bills and their climate footprints. The European Union has already begun to implement a phase out of incandescent bulbs.

Unlike incandescent bulbs, halogen bulbs or LED bulbs, however, CF bulbs are made with mercury, a potent neurotoxin that is especially dangerous to children and pregnant women. For the new study, the researchers tested a worst case scenario for two different CF bulbs that lacked a protective casing. Both bulbs were broken indoors when hot. One bulb contained 2 milligrams of mercury, while the other contained 5 milligrams.

When broken, the bulbs released roughly 7 micrograms of mercury into the air, 20 times the British government's recommended maximum exposure of 0.35 micrograms. Mercury levels remained elevated at floor levels for up to five hours after breakage.

There is no safe level of exposure to mercury.

"The presence of mercury is the downside to energy-saving lamps," said Federal Environment Agency president Jochen Flasbarth. "We need a lamp technology that can prevent mercury pollution soon. 'The positive and necessary energy savings of up to 80 per cent as compared with light bulbs must go hand in hand with a safe product that poses no risks to [health](#)."

If a CF bulb breaks, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends that you shut off all central air or heating and then ventilate and evacuate the room for 10 minutes. The bulb should then be cleaned up, such as with a damp cloth, and placed into a sealable container. The debris should be placed outside until it can be taken to a hazardous waste disposal facility.

All CF bulbs should be disposed of as hazardous waste, never in household trash.

Sources for this story include: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-13...>

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