

I am sending them to you so that you can act on them. I have petitioned the NYS DOH and the NYC DOH to invite the CDC to investigate the magicoreligious mercury exposures described in this article. I urge you to lend your support and cooperation to the CDC's investigation

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## **AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS**

Lynn R. Goldman, MD, MPH; Michael W. Shannon, MD, MPH; and the Committee on Environmental Health

### **Technical Report: Mercury in the Environment: Implications for Pediatricians**

**ABSTRACT.** ... mercury can be an indoor air pollutant, for example, after spills of elemental mercury in the home; ...

#### **SOURCES OF MERCURY IN THE ENVIRONMENT**

##### **Elemental Mercury**

Sources

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Elemental and inorganic mercury have been used in folk remedies around the world. Elemental mercury may be used in homes in rituals, such as those used in Santeria, which is practiced by some immigrants from Haiti and other island nations. In Santeria rituals, elemental mercury is sprinkled around a home as part of magicoreligious ceremonies. Unfortunately, this mercury vaporizes; and may expose children and others who reside in the household.

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##### **TREATMENT**

The most important and most effective treatment involves identifying the mercury source and ending [202] the exposure. Children who have had mercury poisoning should undergo periodic follow-up neurologic examinations by a pediatrician.

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##### **PREVENTION**

[There are no references to preventing magicoreligious exposure in this section]

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##### **CONCLUSIONS**

1. Mercury in all of its forms is toxic to the fetus and children, and efforts should be made to reduce exposure to the extent possible to pregnant women and children as well as the general population. ...
2. Inorganic and elemental mercury should not be present in the home or other environments of children. Pediatricians need to  
  
be aware of traditional folk users of mercury like in Santeria or in ethnic remedies and work sensitively with such families, who  
may initially be unwilling to discuss such factors with physicians and with people outside of their cultural group. Public health  
agencies, community organizations, pediatricians, and other child health providers should work together to identify the diverse  
cultural practices that may lead to mercury exposure.