

POISONology

SAFETY & FIRST AID TIPS FROM THE ARIZONA POISON AND DRUG INFORMATION CENTER

When the fluorescent bulb breaks



Have you ever had a fluorescent bulb break at your house and wondered about the possible dangers? A few times per month we receive calls from people with similar worries about inhaling mercury fumes from the broken bulb. **These light bulbs contain minimal amounts of mercury** that should not cause any effects from a brief exposure. Just clean up and dispose of the broken bulb promptly.

Here are some **simple guidelines to safely clean up** the broken bulb:

1. Open all windows for 30 minutes or so to clear out any dust-like particles.
2. Protect your hands with disposable rubber gloves while cleaning up, and collect the broken pieces and powder using pieces of cardboard to scrape them into a bag. Don't sweep with a broom because this causes the dust to swirl around and possibly be inhaled.
3. Use wet paper towels to wipe up any residual dust.
4. Place all debris into double plastic bags and seal them. Mark "Do not recycle" on the outside. It is appropriate to place the bag in the outdoor trash at this point.
5. If the carpet requires cleaning, then use a vacuum. Remove the vacuum bag or canister when you are finished and discard the debris into double plastic bags and seal.

Feel free to call us anytime to discuss any concerns regarding this matter. We are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Call the tollfree national hotline at 1-800-222-1222 to reach your local poison center. If you live in Arizona outside of Maricopa County, this number will get you to our experts at the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center in Tucson.