

## Refuse to Grow Old

[click here](#)



### Additional Titles

# FLUORESCENT LIGHT BULB WARNING

By Rosalind Peterson  
May 14, 2007  
NewsWithViews.com

### **Other Rosalind Articles:**

[Experimental  
Weather  
Modification Bill  
on Fast Track](#)

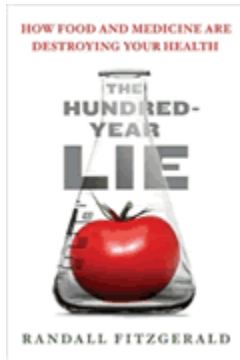
### **More Rosalind Articles**

There is a movement by many states and localities to ban incandescent light bulbs and convert to total use of fluorescent bulbs (CFL) to save energy. And yet there are few who have read the small print on the tiny inside package label of fluorescent bulbs or heard about the EPA's problems with regard to mercury contamination. What should you know about fluorescent light bulbs?



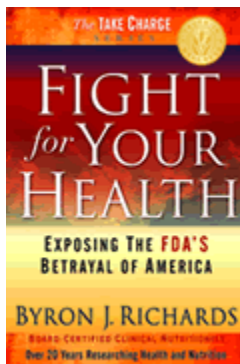
1) Heat resistant glass is used in these bulbs. The quartz arc tube, when operating creates light by generating a considerable amount of Ultraviolet (UV) radiation. How much exposure to this UV radiation goes through the heat resistant glass and what are the human health problems associated with this

The EPA warns everyone that "... Mercury has long been known to have toxic effects on human and wildlife... Mercury is a toxic, persistent, bioaccumulative pollutant that affects the nervous system...."



exposure? How does the public know that the exposure is safe for children and adults?

2) If the glass is broken serious skin burn and eye inflammation from short-wave ultraviolet radiation may occur. Many of these fluorescent bulbs are constructed without automatic shut offs if the light bulbs are broken, thus exposing people to this type of harmful UV radiation.



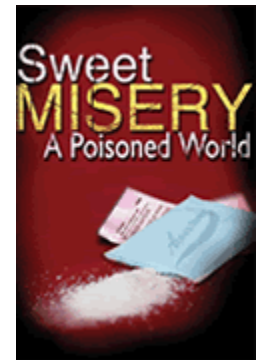
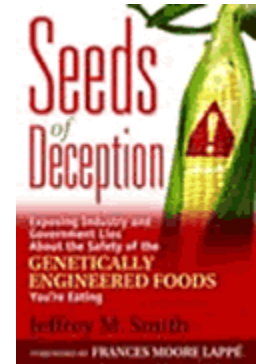
3) In the workplace many employees subjected to this type of lighting develop eyestrain and headaches. In many cases the flickering of these types of lights causes workplace eyestrain and irritation from the lighting being too bright. These issues do not appear to have any solutions at this time other than the use of incandescent light bulbs.

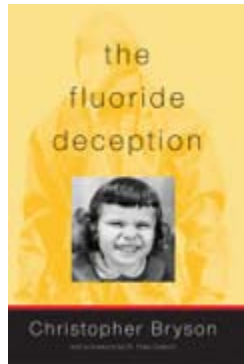
4) According to California Assembly Bill 1109 (2007) Section (e): "...Most fluorescent lighting products contain hazardous levels of mercury. Most incandescent lighting products contain hazardous levels of lead. California prohibits disposing of hazardous lighting products in the solid waste stream. The hazardous materials in these products can be managed through recycling, but current recycling opportunities and levels are virtually nonexistent for most consumers..." Fluorescent light bulbs contain both mercury and lead.



5) According to California Assembly Bill 1109 (2007) Section (f): "Fluorescent lighting products delivering the same level of light at the same level of efficiency can have widely varying levels of mercury..." It appears that the product labels do not designate the levels of mercury in their products so that consumers can pick the ones with the lowest level of mercury to use and for toxic waste disposal. (Vote no on California Assembly Bill 722.)

6) Whether or not shifting from incandescent lighting to fluorescent light will result in a net reduction of mercury emissions due to the displacement of coal fired electricity generation is questionable at this time. More highly polluting production plants using mercury will need to be put online making fluorescent bulbs to replace incandescent bulbs. In addition, the lack of recycling will put this mercury into landfills where it will leach





into drinking water sources and contaminate landfills as is the case at the present time.

7) Clean up instructions for mercury broken bulbs are not provided on the outside of fluorescent manufacturer's packaging at this time. Therefore, consumers are not aware of the following EPA facts:

A. "Never use a vacuum cleaner to clean up mercury. The vacuum will put mercury into the air and increase exposure. The vacuum appliance will be contaminated and have to be disposed of in a hazard waste disposal site."

B. "Never use a broom to clean up mercury..."

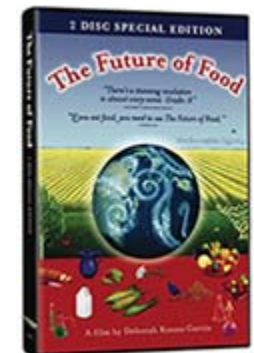
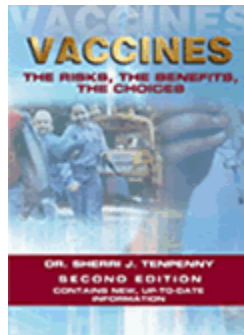
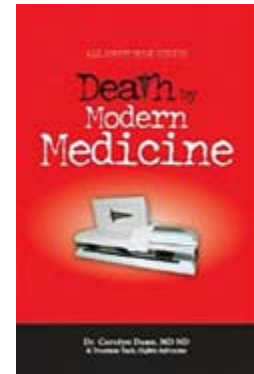
C. "Never wash mercury contaminated items in a washing machine. Mercury may contaminate the machine and/or pollute sewage."

D. Everyone should be removed from the area where the spill occurred; this includes pets. The impacted areas should be sealed off from other areas and all ventilation systems should be turned off from the impacted area.

E. "Never walk around as your shoes might be contaminated with mercury. Contaminated clothing can spread mercury around." In case of fire the entire area will be contaminated with mercury and should be sealed off from any type of use.

F. If a spill occurs on carpet, curtains, upholstery or other like surfaces, these contaminated items should be thrown away in accordance..." and with assistance of your local hazard waste disposal site.

8) The outside label on most fluorescent light bulbs does not carry this hazard information leading the public to believe that these bulbs are safe and that they do not need special recycling as hazardous wastes. And the outside label does not let you know



that used bulbs should be placed in containers where they can't be broken prior to disposal.

According to an [article written by Joseph Farah](#), in WorldNetDaily, on April 16, 2007, is the following statement: "...But with limited recycling prospects and the problems experienced...some think the government, the green community, and industry are putting the cart before the horse..." when they ferociously market fluorescent light bulbs. According to this article one local citizen in Prospect, Maine has to raise \$2,000 to have an environmental cleanup firm do the work and her homeowners insurance won't cover the cost.

Now we have Vice-President Al Gore with books, movies, and speeches promoting the use of fluorescent light bulbs knowing fully well that they are not safe. Some do catch fire if not used in the proper lighting fixtures, which do not include, for example, track, recessed or dimmer fixtures. (Many packages are not clearly marked on this subject.) And known solutions to the problems associated with fluorescent light bulbs are five to ten years away. And prior to any ban on incandescent light bulbs there should be collection and disposal sites available everywhere for these types of products.

Americans also want built-in protections from mercury contamination for air, soil and water supplies prior to any mass changeover to this type of light bulb. Why are these types of light bulbs being promoted when they may not be safe for consumers to use and dispose of when broken?

New lighting systems could be found that work better than either incandescent or fluorescent bulbs. Technological inventions could reduce the amount of electricity used by incandescent bulbs and a whole new generation of lighting systems could be put online like LED lights which may or may not be proven safe with regards to public health. With recycling about ten years away industry could be working on mercury free fluorescent lighting systems to meet energy reduction requirements. We need safe inventions first before we ban incandescent light bulbs.



The EPA warns everyone that "...Mercury has long been known to have toxic effects on human and wildlife...Mercury is a toxic, persistent, bioaccumulative pollutant that affects the nervous system...As it moves through the environmental media, mercury undergoes a series of complex chemical and physical transformations..." Local, state, and federal agencies should be working to reduce the amount of mercury in the environment not promoting more usage of this highly toxic chemical. No one currently knows how many fluorescent bulbs are in landfills at this time. If we expand their usage we are adding to a monumental mercury pollution problem. We definitely need recycling before we need to use more of these fluorescent light bulbs.

***Never Miss  
Another BIG  
Story***

Where are thousands of these fluorescent bulbs, made from (a polluting industry), going to be recycled in the future if we ban incandescent bulbs? Are there recycling centers that can handle mercury contamination from these types of bulbs and take care of clean up when these bulbs are broken in your home and in landfills where they may be dumped? The public has many questions and few answers. Contact your elected representatives and find out where they stand on this important issue. Vote no on legislation that would ban incandescent light bulbs in California and other states. We can have safe and energy efficient light bulbs in the future if we work toward those goals today.

**Information on Fluorescent Light Bulbs**

- 1, [EPA FACT Sheet 2007 - Mercury Hazards Light](#)
- 2, [General Electric 2007 Health Hazards MSDS Bulbs](#)



- 3, [Wikipedia Definition](#)
- 4, ["Consumers in dark over risks of new light bulbs."](#)  
Push for energy-saving fluorescents ignores mercury disposal hazards.
- 5, [EPA Mercury](#)
- 6, [EPA Mercury](#)
- 7, [How to handle Broken Fluorescent Bulbs](#)
- 8, California State Bill # [AB 722 \(2007\) Contact your State Representatives today!](#)
- 9, California State Bill # AB1109 [Hazardous Waste in Light Bulbs \(2007\)](#)
- 10, EPA [How to Handle Hazardous Wastes like Mercury 2007](#)
- 11, [Mercury spills, cleanup instructions, EPA](#)

### **Information on the EPA**

- 1, [U.S. Environment Protection Agency](#)
- 2, [History of the Environmental Protection Agency](#)
- 3, [Historical Time Line EPA](#)
- 4, [EPA Mercury Pollution](#)
- 5, [Wikipedia](#)
- 6, [Global Climate Change - EPA](#)
- 7, [Why are EPA libraries closing?](#)

© 2007 Rosalind Peterson - All Rights Reserved

### **Sign Up For Free E-Mail Alerts**

E-Mails are used strictly for NWVs alerts, not for sale

---

*In 1995, Rosalind, now retired, became a certified California United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency Agriculture Crop Loss Adjustor working in more than ten counties throughout California. Rosalind has a BA degree from Sonoma State University in Environmental Studies & Planning (ENSP), with emphasis on using solar power, photosynthesis, agriculture, and crop production.*

*Between 1989 and 1993 Rosalind worked as an Agricultural Technologist for the Mendocino County Department of Agriculture. After leaving Mendocino County she took a position with the USDA Farm Service Agency as a Program Assistant in Mendocino, Sonoma, and the Salinas County Offices, where she worked until becoming certified as a crop*

*loss adjustor for the State.*

*E-Mail: [info@californiaskywatch.com](mailto:info@californiaskywatch.com)*

---

**Home**



**El Dorado**  
**Discount Gold**

(623) 434-3322  
(602) 228-8203  
[harvey@eldoradogold.net](mailto:harvey@eldoradogold.net)