A number of ethnic groups use toxic remedies, including azarcon, a lead-containing orange powder, and greta, a lead-containing yellow powder used by Mexican Hispanics...

Adulterated Chinese “herbal” medications have caused adverse effects in both adults and children. These medications may contain... heavy metals such as lead, mercury, and cadmium.

---

**Elemental mercury is also used in some folk remedies, such as those of Santeria, practiced by some groups of Hispanic Americans.**

---

Long-term exposure to mercury vapor primarily affects the central nervous system. Early nonspecific signs include insomnia, forgetfulness, loss of appetite, and mild tremor and may be misdiagnosed as psychiatric illness.

---

**Rituals**

In certain ethnic groups, rituals may be a potential route of exposure to environmental contaminants. For example, *some Hispanic Americans who practice Santeria may sprinkle elemental mercury in the house, possibly resulting in elevated levels of mercury in the indoor air* (see Chapter 15).
Index

Mercuric bichloride, 147
Mercuric salts, 145, 146, 147-148, 149-150
Mercurous salts, 145, 146, 147-148, 149-150
Mercury/mercury poisoning, 145-152
   in arts and crafts materials, 271
   clinical effects of, 147-148, 258
   diagnosis of, 148-149
   from elemental mercury, 145, 146, 147, 149
   exposure to
      routes of, 146
      in Santeria, 345
   in fish, 145, 151, 263-264, 265
   from food, 109
   frequently asked questions about, 151-152
   from herbal medicine, 76
   from human milk, 159-160
   information resources on, 152
   from inorganic mercury, 145, 146, 147-148, 149-150
   from organic mercury, 145, 146, 148, 149, 150
   prevention of, 150-151
   systems affected by, 147-148, 258
   teratogenesis from, 148
   treatment of, 149-150
   from water, 252t, 255, 258
   permissible level of, 261t

[Excerpter's Note: The AAP's reference to mercury poisoning from magico-religious mercury use is not based on any specific clinical or environmental findings. It is based in the circumstantial evidence of mercury sales by botanicas and statements about its ritual use. It seemed prudent to the AAP to include a reference to these magico-religious exposure routes because of their obvious toxic potential.]

Verbatim excerpts by:
Arnold P. Wendroff, Ph.D.
**Mercury Poisoning Project**
544 Eighth Street
Brooklyn, NY 11226-4201
(718) 499-8336 Tel & Fax