

Saturday, March 5, 2005

## School's mercury tests continue

By William Croyle  
Enquirer staff writer

**EDGEWOOD** - Lindsey Leach broke a thermometer when she was about 7 years old.

It's a good thing she did.

Lindsey, 13, turned in a classmate Thursday at Turkey Foot Middle School when she saw the girl playing with mercury.

She said she knew it was mercury because of that day it had spilled out of the thermometer.

"At first, I didn't want to tell because I didn't want to be a tattler," Lindsey said. "But I knew it was poison."

Turkey Foot was closed Friday so it could be aired out and cleaned. Parents and their children lined up to get their shoes tested for mercury outside the school.

Numerous agencies, including the Northern Kentucky Independent Health District, U.S.

Management were called to the school Thursday after the substance was discovered.

They determined six kids had played with it at some point in three classrooms. Those rooms were evacuated and closed for the rest of the day.

Evie Van Herpe an official with the health district said mercury is absorbed through vapors, not the skin.

The vapors also have a tendency to cling to shoes.

Kids were sent home at the end of the school day with bags on their shoes. They were advised to put the shoes in the bags when they got home and leave them outside.

Emergency Management workers brought a mobile decontamination unit, a box truck, and provided the shoe inspections on Friday in the school lot.

Ophelia Marks arrived with her son's new \$100 shoes. She left without them. "They took them because the mercury was above the level it should have been," Marks said.

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Parents and students carrying bags of shoes line up to have items checked for mercury at a mobile decontamination trailer set up at Turkey Foot Middle School. The school was closed Friday so it could be aired out and cleaned. The Enquirer/Patrick Reddy

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### RISKS, SYMPTOMS

When inhaled, mercury can cause anything from bronchial damage and renal difficulties to memory disorders, but more common symptoms include motor impairment, depression and sleep disorders. In addition to these chronic ailments, acute ingestion of mercury is tied to central nervous system disorders, vomiting and dementia.

Source: Enquirer research



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**Stacey DeLaReintrie, a contract employee for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, uses a mercury vapor analyzer to check a student's clothes.**

**The Enquirer/Patrick Reddy**  
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