

## **Soundbite Script - Should I worry about mercury and lead poisoning?**

**Dr. Dipti Sabharwal, Family Practice Physician, OSF HealthCare**

“Mercury and lead are both elements. There's usually none to almost trace amounts present in our body. But when these levels are present in higher levels than normal, then that's what causes the toxicity or poisoning.”

**Dr. Dipti Sabharwal, Family Practice Physician, OSF HealthCare**

“That's why people who have hobbies or as work to renovate houses, there is a higher risk of exposure to lead. And for mercury, it's similar for people who are working in manufacturing and handle thermometers and barometers.”

**Dr. Dipti Sabharwal, Family Practice Physician, OSF HealthCare**

“The symptoms are very nonspecific, which is what makes it very hard to be diagnosed. Symptoms could be nausea, vomiting, headache, belly pain, diarrhea, and for mercury poisoning it could be shortness of breath, chest pain. You see a lot of these symptoms that can be caused by other diseases, which is what makes it hard to diagnose, but that along with the history that the patient provides, whether it's occupational or their environment, that's what helps the provider gain a better understanding.”

**Dr. Dipti Sabharwal, Family Practice Physician, OSF HealthCare**

“The bottom line is that attention that should be given to prevention. So, when you're at work, since that is the most common hazard for lead and mercury poisoning, is using personal protective equipment. That's number one and then obviously keeping in mind what the signs and symptoms are and going to the physician earlier if you experience anything, so we can get you treated.”