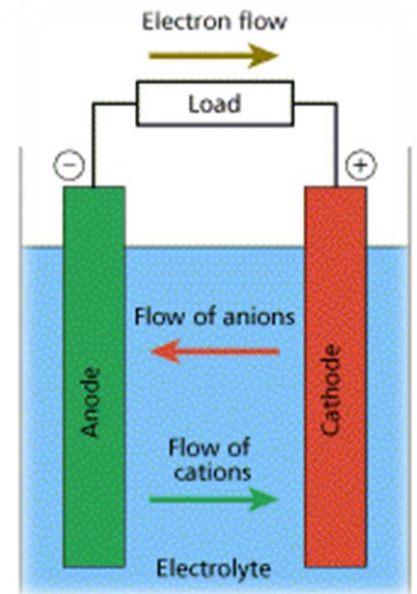


## Batteries, a danger for the environment? - **WHY?** - Paulina –1S

Did you know that batteries are made from different materials like acid, nickel, lithium, alkaline or nickel metal hydride but some of them are actually toxic for our environment?

Examples for these ones are the lead, the mercury or the cadmium. They are called toxic because of their capacity to cause injury or death. However, if we recycle our used batteries, environment can't be contaminated.

Nowadays, a lot of improvements have been done considering this really crucial question about the batteries. We can note that, mercury is less used recently and this happens thanks to the "Mercury-Containing and Rechargeable Battery Management Act" which was passed in 1996. This material is used only in very small button style batteries.



What is really important is that at the end of a battery's life, we have to recycle it in order to avoid all contacts between the battery and the environment because it can cause contamination of the ground or the water. What is even more dangerous is the fact that if the casing of the battery disintegrates into the environment it can even reach humans or wildlife through the food. A battery can be recycled so in this way it can be considered part of the electronic waste.

Another aspect that increases the risks of the batteries is the fact that they are produced and used in very large quantities. Let's take as an example the discard of batteries in the United States: we talk here about 180 000 tons per year. It's scary!

### Lead Pollution from Used Lead-Acid Battery Recycling



Finally, what can we do to prevent the bad effects of the batteries?

The answer is brief and clear:

***Use less,***  
***recycle more,***  
***take rechargeable batteries.***

**Battery:** device that produces electricity from a chemical reaction

**Lead:** soft and malleable metal (chemical element in the carbon group with symbol Pb)

**Cadmium:** soft, bluish-white metal, chemically similar to the zinc and the mercury (chemical element with the symbol Cd)

**Electronic waste:** used electronics, which are destined for reuse, resale and recycling

**Nickel-metal hydride battery:** a type of rechargeable battery

**Lead-Acid Battery:** the oldest type of rechargeable battery