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Bulb cleans as it greens

If you still haven't made the switch from standard light bulbs, a new product promises a tempting new feature that may get you to toss — er, recycle those old incandescents once and for

all.

The Ionic Bulb is a compact fluorescent bulb with a built-in air-purifying microchip designed to remove dust, pet dander, smoke, odors and bacteria from the air. Sounds Earth-friendly. But how on earth does it do all that?

"The purifier is activated by the energy from the bulb when the light is switched on," Annette Hunter, spokeswoman for Ionic Bulb, told us. "The microchip in the bulb emits negative ions that attach themselves to pollutants in the air. It works similarly to the effect of waterfalls and rain in cleaning the air — it's not the water that washes away dirty air particles, it's the negative ions that stabilize and clean the air."

One bulb lasts about seven years and promises to clean 100 square feet of air.

"There is no filter that needs to be cleaned or replaced within the bulb,"

Hunter said. "The bulb just needs to be replaced when its life has ended."

Because compact fluorescent bulbs contain a small amount of mercury, you shouldn't toss them in your household garbage when they burn out. To keep the mercury from leaking out in a landfill, find a hazardous household waste collection site near your home. The Web site earth911.com lets you search for disposal options by ZIP code. Ikea stores also collect used CFLs.

The Ionic Bulb, which is 23 watts, gives off an equivalent amount of light as a standard 100-watt incandescent bulb but uses only 25 percent of the electricity. It also lasts about 10 times longer (10,000 hours) than a traditional bulb. Bulbs can be purchased for \$19.99 for a set of two at newionicbulb.com.

— Heidi Stevens, *Tribune Newspapers*