

This fact sheet answers the most frequently asked health questions (FAQs) about ethylbenzene. For more information, call the ATSDR Information Center at 1-800-232-4636. This fact sheet is one in a series of summaries about hazardous substances and their health effects. It is important you understand this information because this substance may harm you. The effects of exposure to any hazardous substance depend on the dose, the duration, how you are exposed, personal traits and habits, and whether other chemicals are present.

HIGHLIGHTS: Ethylbenzene is a colorless liquid found in a number of products including gasoline and paints. Breathing very high levels can cause dizziness and throat and eye irritation. Breathing lower levels has resulted in hearing effects and kidney damage in animals. Ethylbenzene has been found in at least 829 of 1,689 National Priorities List sites identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

What is ethylbenzene?

Ethylbenzene is a colorless, flammable liquid that smells like gasoline.

It is naturally found in coal tar and petroleum and is also found in manufactured products such as inks, pesticides, and paints.

Ethylbenzene is used primarily to make another chemical, styrene. Other uses include as a solvent, in fuels, and to make other chemicals.

What happens to ethylbenzene when it enters the environment?

- Ethylbenzene moves easily into the air from water and soil.
- It takes about 3 days for ethylbenzene to be broken down in air into other chemicals.
- In surface water, ethylbenzene breaks down by reacting with other chemicals found naturally in water.
- Ethylbenzene can move through soil into groundwater
- In soil, it is broken down by bacteria.

How might I be exposed to ethylbenzene?

- If you live in a city or near many factories or heavily traveled highways, you may be exposed to ethylbenzene in air.
- Releases of ethylbenzene into the air occur from burning oil, gas, and coal and from industries using ethylbenzene.

- Ethylbenzene is not often found in drinking water. Higher levels may be found in residential drinking water wells near landfills, waste sites, or leaking underground fuel storage tanks.
- Working in an industry where ethylbenzene is used or made.
- Using products containing it, such as gasoline, carpet glues, varnishes, and paints.

How can ethylbenzene affect my health?

Exposure to high levels of ethylbenzene in air for short periods can cause eye and throat irritation. Exposure to higher levels can result in dizziness.

Irreversible damage to the inner ear and hearing has been observed in animals exposed to relatively low concentrations of ethylbenzene for several days to weeks.

Exposure to relatively low concentrations of ethylbenzene in air for several months to years causes kidney damage in animals.

How likely is ethylbenzene to cause cancer?

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has determined that ethylbenzene is a possible human carcinogen.

ToxFAQs™ Internet address is <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html>

How can ethylbenzene affect children?

There are no studies evaluating the effects of ethylbenzene exposure on children or immature animals. It is likely that children would have the same health effects as adults. We do not know whether children would be more sensitive than adults to the effects of ethylbenzene.

We do not know if ethylbenzene will cause birth defects in humans. Minor birth defects and low birth weight have occurred in newborn animals whose mothers were exposed to ethylbenzene in air during pregnancy.

How can families reduce the risks of exposure to ethylbenzene?

- Use adequate ventilation to reduce exposure to ethylbenzene vapors from consumer products such as gasoline, pesticides, varnishes and paints, and newly installed carpeting.
- Sometimes older children sniff household chemicals, including ethylbenzene, in an attempt to get high. Talk with your children about the dangers of sniffing chemicals.
- Household chemicals should be stored out of reach of children to prevent accidental poisoning. Always store household chemicals in their original containers; never store them in containers that children would find attractive to eat or drink from, such as old soda bottles. Gasoline should be stored in a gasoline can with a locked cap.

Is there a medical test to determine whether I've been exposed to ethylbenzene?

Ethylbenzene is found in the blood, urine, breath, and some body tissues of exposed people. The most common way to test for ethylbenzene is in the urine. This test measures substances formed by the breakdown of ethylbenzene. Because these substances leave the body very quickly, this test needs to be done within a few hours after exposure occurs.

These tests can show you were exposed to ethylbenzene, but cannot predict the kind of health effects that might occur.

Has the federal government made recommendations to protect human health?

The EPA has determined that exposure to ethylbenzene in drinking water at concentrations of 30 ppm for 1 day or 3 ppm for 10 days is not expected to cause any adverse effects in a child.

The EPA has determined that lifetime exposure to 0.7 ppm ethylbenzene is not expected to cause any adverse effects.

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) has limited workers' exposure to an average of 100 ppm for an 8-hour workday, 40-hour workweek.

References

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). 2007. Toxicological Profile for Ethylbenzene (Draft for Public Comment). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Public Health and Human Services, Public Health Service.

Where can I get more information? For more information, contact the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Division of Toxicology and Environmental Medicine, 1600 Clifton Road NE, Mailstop F-32, Atlanta, GA 30333. Phone: 1-800-232-4636, FAX: 770-488-4178. ToxFAQs Internet address via WWW is <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html>. ATSDR can tell you where to find occupational and environmental health clinics. Their specialists can recognize, evaluate, and treat illnesses resulting from exposure to hazardous substances. You can also contact your community or state health or environmental quality department if you have any more questions or concerns.



This fact sheet answers the most frequently asked health questions (FAQs) about tetrachloroethylene. For more information, call the CDC Information Center at 1-800-232-4636. This fact sheet is one in a series of summaries about hazardous substances and their health effects. It's important you understand this information because this substance may harm you. The effects of exposure to any hazardous substance depend on the dose, the duration, how you are exposed, personal traits and habits, and whether other chemicals are present.

HIGHLIGHTS: Tetrachloroethylene is a manufactured chemical used for dry cleaning and metal degreasing. Exposure to very high concentrations of tetrachloroethylene can cause dizziness, headaches, sleepiness, incoordination, confusion, nausea, unconsciousness, and even death. Tetrachloroethylene has been found in at least 945 of the 1,699 National Priorities List sites identified by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

What is tetrachloroethylene?

Tetrachloroethylene is a nonflammable colorless liquid. Other names for tetrachloroethylene include perchloroethylene, PCE, perc, tetrachloroethene, and perchlor. Most people can smell tetrachloroethylene when it is present in the air at a level of 1 part in 1 million parts of air (1 ppm) or more.

Tetrachloroethylene is used as a dry cleaning agent and metal degreasing solvent. It is also used as a starting material (building block) for making other chemicals and is used in some consumer products.

What happens to tetrachloroethylene when it enters the environment?

- Tetrachloroethylene can be released into air, water, and soil at places where it is produced or used.
- Tetrachloroethylene breaks down very slowly in the air and so it can be transported long distances in the air. Half of the amount in the air will degrade in approximately 100 days.
- Tetrachloroethylene evaporates quickly from water into air. It is generally slow to break down in water.
- Tetrachloroethylene may evaporate quickly from shallow soils or may filter through the soil and into the groundwater below. It is generally slow to break down in soil.

How might I be exposed to tetrachloroethylene?

- When you bring clothes from the dry cleaners, they will release small amounts of tetrachloroethylene into the air.

- When you drink water containing tetrachloroethylene, you are exposed to it. You might also be exposed to tetrachloroethylene that is released into the air during showering and bathing.
- People residing near contaminated sites or dry cleaning locations may be exposed to higher levels than the general population.
- People working in the dry cleaning industries or using metal degreasing products may be exposed to elevated levels of tetrachloroethylene.

How can tetrachloroethylene affect my health?

Breathing high levels of tetrachloroethylene for a brief period may cause dizziness or drowsiness, headache, and incoordination; higher levels may cause unconsciousness and even death.

Exposure for longer periods to low levels of tetrachloroethylene may cause changes in mood, memory, attention, reaction time, and vision.

Studies in animals exposed to tetrachloroethylene have shown liver and kidney effects, and changes in brain chemistry, but we do not know what these findings mean for humans.

How likely is tetrachloroethylene to cause cancer?

Studies in humans suggest that exposure to tetrachloroethylene might lead to a higher risk of getting bladder cancer, multiple myeloma, or non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, but the evidence is not very strong.

Tetrachloroethylene

CAS # 127-18-4

In animals, tetrachloroethylene has been shown to cause cancers of the liver, kidney, and blood system.

EPA considers tetrachloroethylene likely to be carcinogenic to humans by all routes of exposure. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) considers tetrachloroethylene probably carcinogenic to humans. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) considers tetrachloroethylene to be reasonable anticipated to be a human carcinogen.

How can tetrachloroethylene affect children?

It is not known whether children are more susceptible than adults to the effects of tetrachloroethylene.

A few studies in humans have suggested that exposure to tetrachloroethylene increased the numbers of babies with birth defects, but these studies were not large enough to clearly answer the question. Studies in animals exposed by inhalation or stomach tube have not shown clear evidence of specific birth defects.

How can families reduce the risks of exposure to tetrachloroethylene?

- Tetrachloroethylene has been found in low levels in some food. You can minimize the risk of your family's exposure by peeling and thoroughly washing fruits and vegetables before cooking.
- Use bottled water if you have concerns about the presence of tetrachloroethylene in your tap water. You may also contact local drinking water authorities and follow their advice.
- Prevent children from playing in dirt or eating dirt if you live near a waste site that has tetrachloroethylene.
- Tetrachloroethylene is widely used as a scouring solvent that removes oils from fabrics, as a carrier solvent, as a fabric finish or water repellent, and as

a metal degreaser/cleaner. Follow instructions on product labels to minimize exposure to tetrachloroethylene.

Is there a medical test to show whether I've been exposed to tetrachloroethylene?

Tetrachloroethylene and its breakdown products (metabolites) can be measured in blood and urine. However, the detection of tetrachloroethylene or its metabolites cannot predict the kind of health effects that might develop from that exposure. Because tetrachloroethylene and its metabolites leave the body fairly rapidly, the tests need to be conducted within days after exposure.

Has the federal government made recommendations to protect human health?

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has set an 8-hour time weighted average permissible exposure limit of 100 ppm, an acceptable ceiling exposure limit of 200 ppm, and a maximum peak of 300 ppm (not to be exceeded for more than 5 minutes of any 3-hour period).

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends that workplace exposure to tetrachloroethylene be minimized due to concerns about its carcinogenicity.

References

This ToxFAQs™ information is taken from the 2014 Toxicological Profile for Tetrachloroethylene (Draft for Public Comment) produced by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Atlanta, GA

Where can I get more information?

For more information, contact the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Division of Toxicology and Human Health Sciences, 1600 Clifton Road NE, Mailstop F-57, Atlanta, GA 30329-4027.

Phone: 1-800-232-4636, FAX: 770-488-4178.

ToxFAQs™ Internet address via WWW is <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>.

ATSDR can tell you where to find occupational and environmental health clinics. Their specialists can recognize, evaluate, and treat illnesses resulting from exposure to hazardous substances. You can also contact your community or state health or environmental quality department if you have any more questions or concerns.

This fact sheet answers the most frequently asked health questions (FAQs) about heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide. For more information, call the ATSDR Information Center at 1-800-232-4636. This fact sheet is one in a series of summaries about hazardous substances and their health effects. It is important you understand this information because these substances may harm you. The effects of exposure to any hazardous substance depend on the dose, the duration, how you are exposed, personal traits and habits, and whether other chemicals are present.

HIGHLIGHTS: The primary exposure to heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide is from contaminated foods and milk. Little is known about their health effects in humans. At high levels, they may cause damage to your liver and nervous system. Exposure of animals during gestation and infancy can result in damage to the nervous system and the immune systems. Heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide have been found in at least 210 and 200, respectively, of the 1,684 National Priority List sites identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

What are heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide?

Heptachlor is a manufactured chemical and doesn't occur naturally. Pure heptachlor is a white powder that smells like camphor (mothballs). The less pure grade is tan. Trade names include Heptagran®, Basaklor®, Drinox®, Soleptax®, Termide®, Gold Crest H-60®, and Velsicol 104®.

Heptachlor was used extensively in the past for killing insects in homes, buildings, and on food crops. These uses stopped in 1988. Currently it can only be used for fire ant control in underground power transformers.

Heptachlor epoxide is also a white powder. Bacteria and animals break down heptachlor to form heptachlor epoxide. The epoxide is more likely to be found in the environment than heptachlor.

What happens to heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide when they enter the environment?

- Heptachlor doesn't dissolve easily in water; heptachlor epoxide dissolves more easily
- They stick strongly to soil particles and evaporate slowly to air.
- Heptachlor epoxide can stay in the soil and water for many years.

- Plants can take up heptachlor from the soil. Levels of heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide can build up in the tissues of fish and cattle.

How might I be exposed to heptachlor or heptachlor epoxide?

- Eating fish, dairy products, and fatty meats from animals exposed to heptachlor in their food.
- Breast milk from mothers who had high exposures can expose breastfed infants.
- Drinking water, breathing air, or touching soil at waste sites that contain these substances.

How can heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide affect my health?

There is no reliable information on health effects in humans. Liver damage, excitability, and decreases in fertility have been observed in animals ingesting heptachlor. The effects are worse when the exposure levels were high or when exposure lasted many weeks.

Although there is very little information on heptachlor epoxide, it is likely that similar effects would also occur after exposure to this compound.

ToxFAQs™ Internet address is <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html>

How likely are heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide to cause cancer?

Lifetime exposure to heptachlor resulted in liver tumors in animals. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the EPA have classified heptachlor as a possible human carcinogen. EPA also considers heptachlor epoxide as a possible human carcinogen.

How can heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide affect children?

Animals exposed to heptachlor during gestation and infancy may be very sensitive to heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide. Changes in nervous system and immune function were found in these animals. Exposure to higher doses of heptachlor in animals can also result in decreases in body weight and death in newborn animals.

How can families reduce the risks of exposure to heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide?

- People who live in homes where heptachlor was used for termite control or on farms where heptachlor was used on crops may have a higher risk of exposure through contaminated crops, soil, water, and air. To avoid exposure from contaminated soil, you should discourage your children from eating dirt. Make sure they wash their hands frequently and before eating. Discourage children from putting their hands in their mouths or other hand-to-mouth activities.
- Heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide are also persistent in food and milk. Eating fish from contaminated water can increase exposure to heptachlor. Do not fish or eat fish from contaminated water. Local fishing advisories can tell you if the water is contaminated.

Is there a medical test to determine whether I've been exposed to heptachlor or heptachlor epoxide?

Laboratory tests can detect heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide in blood, fat, breast milk, and body tissues after exposure to high levels of these chemicals. These tests are

not commonly available at your doctor's office. Most often, the test for heptachlor epoxide is used because heptachlor is quickly changed into heptachlor epoxide in your body. Blood samples are used most often because they are easy to collect. These tests are specific for heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide.

Methods for measuring heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide in body fat are more precise and can detect lower levels than tests that measure levels in blood. If heptachlor or heptachlor epoxide is found in your blood or fat, it is not possible to tell when you were exposed to these chemicals or if harmful health effects will occur.

Has the federal government made recommendations to protect human health?

The EPA requires that drinking water should not contain more than 0.0004 milligrams heptachlor per liter of water (0.0004 mg/L) and 0.0002 mg heptachlor epoxide per liter of water (0.0002 mg/L).

The FDA controls the amount of heptachlor and heptachlor epoxide on raw food crops and on edible seafood. The limit on food crops is 0.01 parts heptachlor per million parts food (0.01 ppm). The limit in milk is 0.1 parts per million of milk fat. The limit on edible seafood is 0.3 ppm.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has set a limit of 0.5 milligrams heptachlor per cubic meter of workplace air (0.5 mg/m³) for 8 hour shifts and 40 hour work weeks.

References

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). 2007. Toxicological Profile for Heptachlor and Heptachlor Epoxide (Update). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Public Health and Human Services, Public Health Service.

Where can I get more information? For more information, contact the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Division of Toxicology and Environmental Medicine, 1600 Clifton Road NE, Mailstop F-32, Atlanta, GA 30333. Phone: 1-800-232-4636, FAX: 770-488-4178. ToxFAQs Internet address via WWW is <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html>. ATSDR can tell you where to find occupational and environmental health clinics. Their specialists can recognize, evaluate, and treat illnesses resulting from exposure to hazardous substances. You can also contact your community or state health or environmental quality department if you have any more questions or concerns.

