

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) ABOUT

CANCER

Operations at the former Exide battery recycling plant in Vernon released harmful levels of lead and arsenic into its surrounding communities. Contact with high levels of these chemicals increases the risk of cancer, breathing diseases, and learning problems. To protect the public's health, specially-trained workers are cleaning affected homes and yards in these areas. It's normal to have health-related questions during these types of events. This sheet offers answers to some questions about cancer.

1. What is cancer?

Cancer is the name used for a group of diseases where cells grow out of control and spread into nearby tissues (organs, muscles, nerves). There are more than 100 types of cancer. In the United States, about 1 in 3 people will develop cancer in their lifetime.

2. What are the risk factors?

A risk factor is something that can increase a person's chance of getting a disease. Different types of cancers have different risk factors. Genes (family history), lifestyle, and the environment around us can affect our risk for cancer. Having one or more risk factors does not mean that a person will get the disease. Some people get cancer without having any known risk factors.

3. What is a carcinogen?

A carcinogen is something that can damage cells and cause cancer. How often and how long a person is exposed to a carcinogen can determine if a person will develop cancer. Contact with carcinogens does not always cause cancer, but it can increase the risk of developing certain types of cancer.

4. Who is at risk for contact with carcinogens?

People who live or work near the former Exide battery recycling plant in Vernon may be at a greater risk for developing cancers related to these chemicals. Even though the Exide plant is now closed, these chemicals may have been present for a long period of time.

5. What can I do if I have medical concerns?

People who work or live near the former Exide plant are encouraged to discuss any medical concerns with their regular healthcare provider.

Chemicals Found Near Exide

- **Arsenic:** Can cause cancers of the skin, lung, digestive tract, liver, kidney, and body systems.
- **Benzene:** May increase the risk of developing leukemia and other blood disorders.
- **1,3-Butadiene:** Studies have shown that people who work around this chemical have an increased risk of developing leukemia.

For More Information

Los Angeles County,
Department of Public Health
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/exide/>

National Cancer Institute
<https://www.cancer.gov/>

Department of Toxic Substances
and Control
www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Projects/exide_faq.cfm

Department of Health Services
Los Angeles County Clinics
<http://dhs.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dhs/locations/>

