



Formaldehyde

1. What is formaldehyde and where can I find it?

Formaldehyde is a colorless, flammable gas. Sources of formaldehyde include:

Glues and adhesives	Dyes	Fertilizers
Plywood	Permanent-press fabrics	Antiseptics
Particle board	Draperies	Medicine
Carpets	Cosmetics	Pesticides
Automobiles	Paper coatings	Cigarettes
Medium Density fiberboard (MDF)		

It can also be found in unvented, fuel-burning appliances, like kerosene heaters and gas stoves.

2. How might I be exposed to formaldehyde?

The above products may release small amounts of formaldehyde into the air. Most human exposures occur from breathing this air, especially in closed spaces.

3. How can formaldehyde affect my health?

Health effects depend on the level of exposure and can include burning and watery eyes; nose and throat irritation; coughing and difficulty breathing; or allergic reactions. In addition, formaldehyde has been shown to cause cancer in animals used for scientific research. Scientists are continuing to study long-term health effects in humans.

4. How can I reduce my exposure to formaldehyde?

- Be aware of products in your home that may contain formaldehyde.
- Use air conditioners and dehumidifiers to maintain proper temperature and humidity indoors.
- Make sure heaters are properly vented and maintained.
- Open windows and use fans to bring fresh air indoors, especially after bringing new sources of formaldehyde into the home.

Sources

1. *Formaldehyde*. L.A. Department of Public Health. <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/tox/>
2. *Formaldehyde*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/Environmental/>
3. *Formaldehyde*. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency <http://www.epa.gov/>

For additional resources, please dial 2-1-1 or visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.