

1 Tips on cadmium

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3 Cadmium is a heavy metal naturally found in water, rocks, and soil. It can be taken up by plants like
4 tobacco and accumulate in animals such as fish, shellfish, and deer. Cadmium is used in
5 batteries, metal coatings, plastics, and pigments.

6 Acute exposure to high cadmium levels can cause life-threatening lung inflammation when inhaled
7 or GI irritation when ingested. Chronic exposure can cause proteinuria, kidney stones, painful bone
8 disease, olfactory impairment, emphysema, and malignancies such as lung cancer.

9 Acute toxicity is primarily a clinical diagnosis. Blood cadmium levels can confirm recent exposure,
10 while a 24-hour urine level can indicate chronic exposure.

11 Treatment is primarily supportive, and ongoing exposure should be avoided or reduced when
12 possible.

13 Counsel patients to eat a balanced diet and avoid tobacco smoke. Advise patients who work with
14 cadmium that employers are responsible for informing them of their workplace hazards, providing
15 proper PPE (personal protective equipment), and ensuring that workspaces are well-ventilated.

16 Counsel these patients to use proper PPE, keep their work areas clean, and shower and change
17 their clothes and shoes before returning home. Consult a specialist in medical toxicology or
18 occupational and environmental medicine regarding a treatment plan as needed.

19 Visit ATSDR's website to learn more.