Hexachlorobutadiene- ToxFAQs™

What is hexachlorobutadiene?

Hexachlorobutadiene is a clear liquid that can smell like turpentine. It is not found naturally in the environment. Hexachlorobutadiene is formed as a byproduct when other chemicals are made.

Hexachlorobutadiene is used mainly to make rubber compounds. It is also used as a solvent (to dissolve other chemicals), a lubricant, a heat transfer liquid, and a hydraulic fluid.

How can I be exposed to hexachlorobutadiene?

Most people are not likely to be exposed to hexachlorobutadiene. The most likely way you could be exposed to very small amounts of hexachlorobutadiene is from eating contaminated food or water, or from breathing contaminated air. If you live near a hazardous waste site, you might be exposed to hexachlorobutadiene from contaminated air or dirt. You could also be exposed if you eat large amounts of fish from contaminated waters.

How can hexachlorobutadiene affect my health?

There is very little information on health problems in people exposed to hexachlorobutadiene. Information on the health effects have come from studies done in animals. Those animals were exposed to levels that are much higher than found in the environment.

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Kidney damage was seen in rats and mice that ate low levels of hexachlorobutadiene over a short or long period of time. Breathing low levels of hexachlorobutadiene or having it touch the skin for a short time led to kidney damage in some animals.

Nose irritation and breathing problems were observed in animals that breathed hexachlorobutadiene vapors (the gas that comes off of it). There was no evidence of lung damage in these animals.

Reduced body weights of animal fetuses and pups (newborn animals) and lower maternal body weight gain during pregnancy were seen in animals that ate low levels or breathed hexachlorobutadiene. Exposure did not affect the development of the fetus.

Hexachlorobutadiene

Can hexachlorobutadiene cause cancer?

Kidney cancer has been seen in rats that ate hexachlorobutadiene over a long period of time; these levels are much higher than levels in the environment.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers hexachlorobutadiene a possible human carcinogen (causing cancer). The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the International Agency for Research on Cancer have not evaluated the carcinogenicity of hexachlorobutadiene.

Can I get a medical test to check for hexachlorobutadiene?

Tests are available to measure levels of hexachlorobutadiene and its breakdown products in blood, urine, and fat. These tests cannot predict if you will have health problems from the exposure to hexachlorobutadiene. Doctor's offices do not routinely offer these tests. If you think you have been exposed to this or any other chemical, talk to your doctor or nurse or call poison control.

How can I protect myself and my family from hexachlorobutadiene?

Most people don't need to take any special steps to avoid hexachlorobutadiene in their daily lives. Keep children from playing in the dirt near hazardous waste sites to avoid coming in contact with hexachlorobutadiene. Hexachlorobutadiene has a strong odor; you should avoid soils or liquids with strong odors.

Follow health advisories that tell you about consumption of fish and wildlife caught in contaminated areas, or check with your state or local health department.

For more information:

Call **CDC-INFO** at 1-800-232-4636, or submit your question online at https://wwwn.cdc.gov/dcs/ContactUs/Form

Go to ATSDR's Toxicological Profile for hexachlorobutadiene:

https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxProfiles/ToxProfiles.aspx?id=865&tid=168

Go to ATSDR's Toxic Substances Portal: https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/index.aspx

Find & contact your ATSDR Regional Representative at http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/DRO/dro_org.html