

Good Habits Reduce Occupational Cancer Risk

We can be exposed to carcinogens in dust, liquid, gas, or wave form. They can be colorless, odorless and invisible.

ROUTES INTO THE BODY	EXAMPLES	MEANS OF PREVENTION
Inhalation	Wood dust	Local exhaust ventilation, Respiratory Protection
	Silica dust	Working Methods, Local Exhaust Ventilation Respiratory protection
	Asbestos fibers in materials handled	Working methods, Personal hygiene Respiratory protection, Protective clothing
	Diesel engine exhaust	Local exhaust ventilation, General ventilation, Mechanical maintenance,
Absorption through skin	Solvents used for cleaning	Working methods, Appropriate gloves Substitution
Skin Contact	Hand contact with tar, soot, or pitch	Working methods, Personal hygiene, Appropriate gloves
Direct Exposure	Solar Radiation outdoors	Hat, Light-colored, Long-sleeved clothing, Work schedule
	X-Rays for medical or industrial applications	Working Methods, Physical Barriers
Ingestion	Handling food or cigarette with dirty hands	Working Methods, Personal hygiene

Even very low exposure to carcinogens can increase the risk of developing cancer. We spend 40 hours or more a week at work for 40+ years.

We should form habits to reduce exposure as much as possible.

Around 12,000-55,000 people die from occupational cancer in the U.S. each year.¹

How to Identify Carcinogens:

1. Product labels
2. Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
3. Signage

Carcinogen



How to Protect Yourself:

1. Make proper use of protective equipment
2. Develop safe habits: Wash hands and face before eating
3. Stay vigilant: read labels, report spills
4. Leave work hazards at work: Don't take outer protective clothing home, wash hands before leaving work
5. Remove your shoes before going in the house to prevent pesticides from being tracked inside



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April 2014

Sources:

¹ WHO. "Occupational carcinogens." Driscoll, Steenland, Prüss-Üstün, Nelson, Leigh. 2004

¹ CDC. "National Vital Statistics Reports." Peters, Kockanek, Murphey. 1998. Vol 47, Num 9.

¹ CDC. "National Vital Statistics Reports." Hoyert, Heron, Murphy, Kung. 2006. Vol 54, Num 13.

IRSST. Communications and Knowledge Transfer Division. Carcinogens in the Workplace? Nov 2013.