



PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET

BENZENE

What is benzene?

Benzene is a colorless liquid with a sweet odor. Liquid benzene changes to benzene vapor very quickly and dissolves slightly in water. It is highly flammable and is formed from both natural processes and human activities

What are possible methods of exposure?

- low levels of benzene (outdoor)
 - tobacco smoke
 - automobile service stations
 - exhaust from motor vehicles
 - industrial release
- higher levels of benzene (indoor)
 - glues
 - paints
 - furniture wax
 - detergents
- major source of exposure is through tobacco smoke

What are possible symptoms of benzene exposure?

- drowsiness
- dizziness
- unconsciousness

How is benzene detected?

Benzene is a clear, colorless-to-light yellow liquid with a sweet odor.

What is the treatment for exposure to benzene?

If you have been exposed to high levels of benzene, contact the emergency medical authorities immediately.

There is no specific antidote for benzene, but its effects can be treated, and most exposed persons recover fully. Persons who have experienced serious symptoms may need to be hospitalized.

For more information on benzene visit:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/benzene/