

# Arsenic & Arsenic Compounds

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## Summary of Health Effects

Arsenic and arsenic compounds are known to cause cancer in humans. Arsenic oxides may cause damage to the reproductive system.

## How are arsenic and arsenic compounds used?

Arsenic is mainly used as a wood preservative,<sup>1</sup> and has been found in many children's school products, according to the Danish Environmental Protection Agency.<sup>2</sup>

## Toxicity: What are its health effects?

The International Agency for Research on Cancer has determined that there is sufficient evidence that arsenic is carcinogenic to humans.<sup>3</sup>

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has classified inorganic arsenic as a human carcinogen.<sup>4</sup>

The National Toxicology Program has listed arsenic in the Report on Carcinogens as a

known human carcinogen based on sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity in humans.<sup>5</sup>

Arsenic compounds are included on California's Proposition 65 as carcinogens, and arsenic oxides are listed as reproductive toxicants.<sup>6</sup>

## Exposure: How can a person come in contact with it?

A person can come in contact with arsenic or arsenic compounds by swallowing it, breathing it in, or from skin contact.<sup>5</sup>

Arsenic is a naturally occurring substance that all humans may be exposed to through food, water, soil and air.<sup>1</sup>

Skin contact may occur through contact with arsenic-treated wood.<sup>1</sup>

Arsenic has been identified in the EPA's Urban Air Toxics Strategy as one of 33 hazardous air pollutants that present the greatest threat to public health in urban areas.<sup>7</sup>

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## References

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