



## 1. What is formaldehyde and where can I find it?

Formaldehyde is a colorless, flammable gas. Sources of formaldehyde include:

- Glues and adhesives
- Plywood
- Particle board
- Medium density fiberboard (MDF)
- Paper coatings
- Dyes
- Permanent-press fabrics
- Draperies
- Carpets
- Pesticides
- Fertilizers
- Antiseptics
- Medicines
- Cosmetics
- Automobiles
- Cigarettes

It can also be found in unvented, fuel-burning appliances, like kerosene heaters and gas stoves.

## 2. How might I be exposed to formaldehyde?

The above products may release small amounts of formaldehyde into the air. Most human exposures occur from breathing this air, especially in closed spaces.

## 3. How can formaldehyde affect my health?

Health effects depend on the level of exposure and can include burning and watery eyes; nose and throat irritation; coughing and difficulty breathing; and allergic reactions. In addition, formaldehyde has been shown to cause cancer in animals used for scientific research. Scientists are continuing to study long-term health effects in humans.

## 4. How can I reduce my exposure to formaldehyde?

- Be aware of products in your home that may contain formaldehyde.
- Use air conditioners and dehumidifiers to maintain proper temperature and humidity indoors.
- Make sure heaters are properly vented and maintained.
- Open windows and use fans to bring fresh air indoors, especially after bringing new sources of formaldehyde into the home.
- *Don't smoke!*

### Sources

1. *Formaldehyde*. L.A. County Department of Public Health. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh>
2. *Formaldehyde*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>
3. *Formaldehyde*. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency <http://epa.gov/iaq/formalde.html>

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website:  
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.