

ToxTown

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS AND TOXIC CHEMICALS WHERE YOU LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY

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Styrene

What is Styrene?

Styrene is a flammable liquid that is used to make polystyrene plastics, fiberglass, rubber, and latex. It occurs naturally in some fruits, vegetables, meats, nuts, and beverages.

Styrene is used to make:

- Insulation
- Pipes
- Automobile parts
- Printing cartridges and copy machine toner
- Food containers
- Packaging
- Carpet backing
- Luggage
- Shoes
- Toys
- Floor waxes and polishes

Cigarette smoke and [vehicle](#) exhaust contain styrene.

See also: [Factories](#) [Homes](#) [Fuel Industry](#) [Cancer](#) [Learning and Developmental Disabilities](#) [Reproductive Health](#)

Where is Styrene found?

- Consumer products – cigarettes, and many packaging, household, and building products
- Air – emissions from styrene-based products, cigarettes, vehicle exhaust, and copy machines
- Food and water – containing styrene from naturally occurring sources or contamination

How can I be exposed to Styrene?

Styrene commonly enter(s) the body through:



Ingestion (swallowing)

- Swallowing food or water contaminated with styrene. Styrene may leach from polystyrene containers used for food, but the levels are low.

Inhalation (breathing)

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- Smoking cigarettes, or breathing cigarette smoke, secondhand smoke, or emissions from vehicles, copy machines, or building materials



Skin contact

- Touching products made with styrene

What happens when I am exposed to Styrene?

Short-term:

Exposure to styrene can cause:

- Irritation to the eyes, skin, and nose
- **Gastrointestinal effects**
- Respiratory effects

Long-term:

Long-term exposure to styrene can cause:

- Central nervous system and kidney effects
- Headaches
- Depression
- Fatigue and weakness
- Hearing loss
- Balance and concentration problems
- Cancer

Who is at risk for exposure to Styrene?

- Consumers
 - Some food, packaging materials, and consumer and building products contain styrene.
- Cigarette smokers
 - Cigarette smoke and secondhand smoke contain styrene.

Reduce your risk

If you think your health has been affected by exposure to styrene, contact your health care professional.

Always wash your hands thoroughly after handling chemicals. For poisoning emergencies or questions about possible poisons, please contact your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222.

Evaluate



Avoid and Address



Protect Children



External links

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National Library of Medicine Resources and Databases

- [Styrene. Hazardous Substances Data Bank](#)

Search results on styrene from a toxicology database that focuses on the toxicology of potentially hazardous chemicals.

Additional Resources

- [Styrene](#)

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

Answers to questions about styrene exposure, associated adverse health effects, and links to additional resources from a federal institute that investigates the interplay between environmental exposures, human biology, genetics, and common diseases to help prevent disease and improve human health.

- [Styrene](#)

Environmental Protection Agency

Factsheet with answers to frequently asked questions about styrene, including its health effects, regulations for its presence in drinking water, as well as information on how it gets into and is removed from drinking water.

- [Styrene](#)

Environmental Protection Agency

Resource about styrene, including physical properties, sources of potential exposure, uses, and health hazard information.

- [Styrene. ToxFAQs](#)

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Factsheet with answers to the most frequently asked questions about styrene exposure and its effect on human health developed by a federal public health agency that protects communities from harmful health effects related to exposure to natural and man-made hazardous substances.



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Reviewed October 2019

Published May 31, 2017

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