

Trichloroethylene (TCE)

Quick Facts

- Trichloroethylene is also known as TCE and trichloroethene.
- Breathing TCE vapors in homes and buildings from contaminated soil or groundwater beneath them is one way that people could be exposed to TCE.
- Women who are or might be pregnant should especially avoid exposure to TCE. TCE has the potential to cause serious health problems for the fetus.

What is TCE?

TCE is a chemical used to remove grease from metal parts. It was also used in dry cleaning and is formed from dry cleaning chemicals.



How could I be exposed to TCE?

- Breathing TCE vapors in homes and buildings from contaminated soil or groundwater beneath them. TCE vapors found underneath or near a building can enter the air of a building and reach harmful levels.
- Living or working in a home or building where TCE is entering the indoor air from a nearby spill.

How can TCE affect my health?

- TCE could cause heart problems for the fetus.
- TCE is known to cause kidney cancer in humans. TCE is also linked to certain other types of cancer in humans.
- Not everyone will get sick from breathing in TCE. Chemicals affect people in different ways. If you have health concerns, talk to your doctor. Mention your possible exposure to TCE.



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Is there a test to find out if someone has been exposed to TCE?

- It only takes a few days for your body to get rid of TCE.
- TCE and its breakdown products (metabolites) can be measured in blood and urine if the test is done before your body gets rid of the chemical.
- Even if TCE or its metabolites are found in blood and urine, it does not mean that health problems will happen. If you have one of the health problems listed on this factsheet, it doesn't mean you've been exposed to these chemicals.

How can families lower their risk of exposure to TCE?

If TCE has been found at your home, follow advice from public health officials from your local health department or Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).



Want to know more?

To learn more about TCE in your community, contact:

For more information from MDHHS, call 1-800-648-6942.

Information in this fact sheet is from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Tox FAQ's for Trichloroethylene (TCE) and Toxicological Profile for Trichloroethylene (TCE).

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