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Formaldehyde

National Cancer Institute

Source

National Cancer Institute. *Formaldehyde*. NCI Thesaurus. Code C29744.

A colorless poisonous gas synthesized by the oxidation of methanol and used as an antiseptic, disinfectant, histologic fixative, and general-purpose chemical reagent for laboratory applications. Formaldehyde is readily soluble in water and is commonly distributed as a 37% solution in water; formalin, a 10% solution of formaldehyde in water, is used as a disinfectant and to preserve biological specimens. Environmentally, formaldehyde may be found in the atmosphere, smoke from fires, automobile exhaust and cigarette smoke. Small amounts are produced during normal metabolic processes in most organisms, including humans.