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Benzene

National Cancer Institute

Source

National Cancer Institute. *Benzene*. NCI Thesaurus. Code C302.

A clear, colorless, highly flammable and volatile, liquid aromatic hydrocarbon with a gasoline-like odor. Benzene is found in crude oils and as a by-product of oil-refining processes. In industry benzene is used as a solvent, as a chemical intermediate, and is used in the synthesis of numerous chemicals. Exposure to this substance causes neurological symptoms and affects the bone marrow causing aplastic anemia, excessive bleeding and damage to the immune system. Benzene is a known human carcinogen and is linked to an increased risk of developing lymphatic and hematopoietic cancers, acute myelogenous leukemia, as well as chronic lymphocytic leukemia. (NCI05)