



# Chlordane

## SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH BULLETIN

### What is Chlordane?

Chlordane is a man-made pesticide once widely used (in the United States) for pest and termite control on agricultural crops, lawns, gardens, and residential foundations. In 1988, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officially banned chlordane due to concerns about its impact on health and the environment. Chlordane binds tightly to soil and can linger for over 20 years after application. Soil disturbances due to construction or digging can expose chlordane to the surface. Exposure to people and animals may occur through breathing in contaminated indoor air or touching treated soil.

### Chlordane Health Hazards

Disturbing soil previously sprayed with chlordane may lead to contact with the chemical. Exposure may lead to nervous system effects such as headaches, dizziness, or irritability:

**Ingestion:** Children may be at a higher risk of accidentally swallowing contaminated soil particles.

**Inhalation and skin contact:** When working with contaminated soil, breathing in chlordane dust or absorption through skin is possible.

**Long-Term Cancer Risk:** Chlordane is considered a “probable human carcinogen” by the EPA, meaning it has been shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals, but there is not enough data to be certain about its effects on humans.



### Chlordane Control

While chlordane is no longer used, it is still possible to find it near residential housing due to its ability to remain in the environment. Strategies to reduce chlordane exposure are similar to controls used to limit lead in soil exposure and include:

- Avoid digging in or disturbing the soil within 40 inches of the foundation
- Avoid eating produce grown in the soil within 40 inches of the foundation
- Reduce bare soil exposure by using mulch, shrubs, or another suitable covering
- Wash hands if in contact with contaminated soil

### USCG Assessment Efforts

The USCG Safety Service Center (SAFECEN), Shore Infrastructure Logistics Center (SILC), supporting units, and partners are working together to evaluate risks and to keep residents and workers safe. So far, testing of homes known to have chlordane shows that it was applied legally and correctly in the past. The results indicate no special cleanup is needed, and that the health risk to residents from chlordane is low. The USCG is making sure that proper safety measures are in place to protect everyone.

### More Information

[CDC Chlordane Fact Sheet](#)

[EPA Chlordane Fact Sheet](#)

[ATSDR Toxic Substance Portal](#)