

Perchlorate Fact Sheet

Perchlorate is an ingredient in rocket fuel and explosives. It also occurs naturally in dry regions, such as in the Southwestern U.S. Industrial uses of perchlorate have led to contamination of soil, groundwater, and drinking water in some areas of California. Perchlorate lasts a long time in the environment and can accumulate in various crops.

Perchlorate is found in

- Solid fuel for rockets and missiles.
- Road flares, fireworks, explosives, and matches.
- Some drinking water sources, near areas where perchlorate contamination has occurred.
- Some fruits and vegetables, such as lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, and cantaloupe.
- Some milk and some powdered infant formula.

Possible health concerns

Perchlorate can interfere with the thyroid gland's ability to use iodide. This can decrease production of thyroid hormone, which:

- May affect brain development in the fetus and infant.
- May affect a child's ability to learn.
- May increase risk factors for heart disease.

Possible ways to reduce exposure

- If you live in an area where perchlorate contamination is a concern and your water comes from a private well, consider having it tested for perchlorate. (If your water comes from a public water supplier, it is already tested regularly for perchlorate.)
- Include plenty of variety in your and your children's diets.

Importance of healthy levels of iodide

Maintaining a healthy level of iodide in the body is important. A good way to get the right amount of iodide is through your diet, by eating foods like seafood, dairy products, and eggs.

For more information:

Perchlorate fact sheet: <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfags/tfacts162.pdf>

Perchlorate in food: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodbornellnessContaminants/ChemicalContaminants/ucm077572.htm>