# **Organochlorine Pesticides** Fact Sheets

Organochlorine pesticides were once widely used in agriculture and for home pest control. Most organochlorine pesticides, including all those measured by Biomonitoring California, are no longer used in the U.S. These pesticides have spread through the environment and take a long time to break down.

## Organochlorine pesticides are found in

- Some high-fat dairy products, such as butter and high-fat cheeses like cream cheese and American cheese.
- Some high-fat meats, such as some ground beef.
- Some fatty fish, such as catfish, salmon, and canned sardines. Fish are still good for you to eat. Fatty fish are an excellent source of healthy fats (like "omega-3" fatty acids) and protein.

## Possible health concerns

Organochlorine pesticides:

- May affect the developing fetus, possibly leading to later changes in learning and behavior.
- May interfere with the body's natural hormones.
- May have effects on reproduction, such as decreased fertility.
- May increase cancer risk.

## Possible ways to reduce exposure

Organochlorine pesticides have been decreasing in the environment and food because they are no longer used in the U.S. You might further reduce your exposure by:

- Including plenty of variety in your diet.
- Trimming off skin from fish and fat from meat and cooking on a rack to let fat drain off.
- Washing your hands often, especially before eating or preparing food, cleaning your floors regularly, and dusting with a damp cloth. This is because organochlorine pesticides may be in dust and soil from past use.

**For more information:**

Information on DDT, an organochlorine pesticide, in fish: www.oehha.ca.gov/fish/chems/ddtfacts.html