What evidence is there that styrene causes cancer?

**Human Studies**

The limited evidence for cancer from styrene in humans is from occupational studies showing increased risks for lymphohematopoietic cancers, such as leukemia and lymphoma, and genetic damage in the white blood cells, or lymphocytes, of workers exposed to styrene. There is also some evidence for increased risk of cancer in the pancreas or esophagus among some styrene workers, but the evidence is weaker than that for lymphohematopoietic cancers.

**Animal Studies**

Styrene caused lung tumors in several strains of mice.

**Mechanistic Studies**

Exactly how styrene causes cancer is not fully understood, but styrene is converted, in laboratory animals and humans, to styrene–7,8–oxide, which is listed in the Report on Carcinogens as **reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen**. Styrene-7,8-oxide causes genetic damage and has been found in the blood of workers exposed to styrene.

What are some things I can do to prevent exposure to styrene?

- Stop smoking. Styrene is found in tobacco smoke.
- Limit children's exposure to tobacco smoke.
- Adhere to federal government regulations. Workers and employers should practice good occupational health behaviors. This may include wearing protective clothing, respirators, and gloves. Work places should be well ventilated.

Where do I go for more information?

- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/styrene](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/styrene)