

CANCER AND CHEMICALS

IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY



Cancer is a complex disease with both genetic and environmental origins, but researchers estimate that more than two-thirds of cancers are due to environmental causes. Key environmental factors include lifestyle, diet and exposures to cancer-causing chemicals, or “carcinogens,” that are commonly found where we all live, work and play.

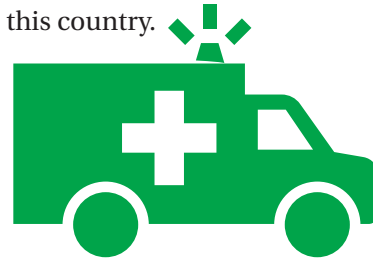
How does cancer impact me and my family?

The most commonly diagnosed cancers among Latinos are cancers of the prostate, breast, lung, and colon.

Compared with non-Latino white populations, Latino communities suffer from higher rates of lymphocytic leukemia and stomach, cervix, liver, and gallbladder cancers.

Latinos are more likely not to be diagnosed with cancer until later, more advanced stages of the disease.

Cancer death rates among U.S.-born Latinos are 22% higher than rates among foreign-born Latinos in this country.



Is there a chemical connection?

Scientists and regulators have identified hundreds of substances in the environment that are known or likely to be carcinogens. Many of these chemicals are found in common household products and in the workplace. A few examples:

Formaldehyde: used in a variety of household products, including lotions, shower gels, shampoos, building materials and wrinkle-free clothing



Styrene: used in polystyrene (Styrofoam™), plastics, rubber, linings for food containers, building materials, carpets, and household paints and adhesives



Vinyl chloride: a key building block for PVC plastics, which are used in food packaging, medical products, toys, appliances, cars and water pipes

Benzene: widely used in industrial production processes (including for plastics, paints and dyes) and released in tobacco smoke and motor vehicle emissions