



UNDERSTANDING MANGANESE

Manganese is a metal used to make steel and other products. Manganese is also a nutrient found in several foods and is necessary for good health. However, in excess amounts, manganese can be a neurotoxin. This means it is harmful to the brain.

People can be exposed to excess levels of manganese in a number of ways.



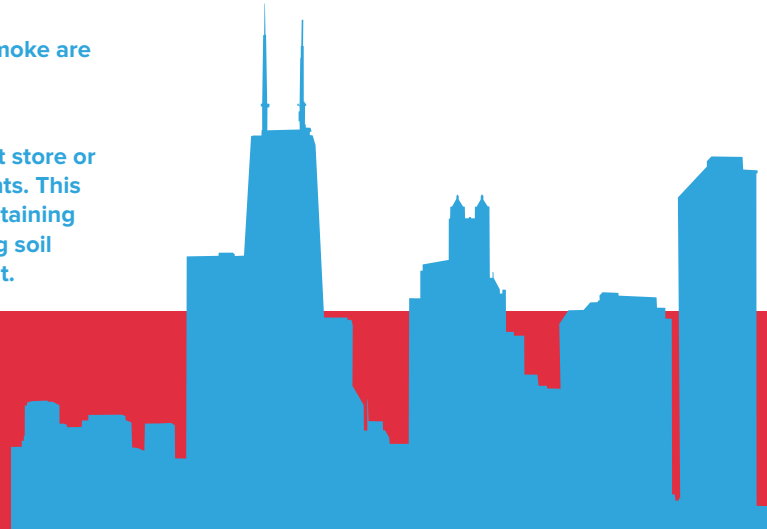
People with certain industrial jobs, like welding or steel-making, may be exposed to excess amounts.



People who smoke tobacco or inhale second-hand smoke are exposed to excess amounts of manganese.



People who live near current or former industries that store or handle manganese may be exposed to excess amounts. This may occur as a result of breathing-in manganese-containing dust that is blown off-site, or breathing-in or ingesting soil that is contaminated with manganese-containing dust.



MANGANESE IN SOUTHEAST CHICAGO

In 2014, air monitors on the Southeast Side of Chicago showed elevated levels of manganese. S.H. Bell Company (located at 10218 S. Avenue O) was identified as a source of the manganese and was required by both the City and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to install strict dust controls and additional air monitors. Results of this air monitoring confirmed that manganese dust was blowing off-site. In early 2018, CDPH also found high levels of manganese in soil samples collected in the area.

What nearby companies store and handle manganese?



S.H. Bell stores and handles manganese. At least four other facilities, including Watco Companies (located at 2926 E. 126th Street), North American Stevedoring (located at 9301 S. Kreiter Avenue), Horsehead/AZR (located at 2701 E. 114th Street) and Calumet River Terminal Ltd (located at 10740 S. Burley Avenue), also store and handle manganese. Efforts are underway to identify other companies that store or handle manganese on the Southeast Side.

Has manganese been detected in the soil?



Yes. CDPH tested the soil in a residential neighborhood near S.H. Bell and discovered elevated levels of manganese. CDPH has since referred the matter to the U.S. EPA who will conduct a more thorough analysis and make recommendations for action.

What is Chicago doing to address the issue?



Strengthening current laws

- Passed a new law banning new bulk manganese handling facilities and prohibiting existing facilities from expanding.
- The Chicago Department of Public Health is updating current bulk materials rules to ensure Chicago's laws meet the needs of our communities.

Investigating further for ongoing action

- Launch air sampling near S.H. Bell, and soil sampling near AZR and Watco industrial sites.
- Request U.S. EPA to conduct full soil analysis and make recommendations for action.
- Request U.S. Centers for Disease Control to conduct a health consultation to determine potential impact of manganese on human health.

PROTECTING AGAINST EXCESS EXPOSURE

There are a number of ways everyone can reduce their exposure to manganese dust and make their homes healthier.



Wipe down children's toys with soap and water to keep dust from settling.



Remove shoes before entering your home to help keep soil and manganese dust outside.



Keep windows closed on very dry and windy days when dust is visible.



Prevent young children from playing in bare soil. If possible, plant grass over the soil, or cover it with mulch or wood chips.



Use a non-abrasive household cleaner - do not use bleach and do not mix bleach with other cleaners.



Mop floors and wipe surfaces using the household cleaner - start from the cleanest area and work towards the dirtiest.



Avoid dry sweeping floors - this will spread dust.



If you garden, use raised beds with purchased soil and wash vegetables with cold water and a brush.



What should I do if I'm experiencing an illness or other health issue I believe is due to manganese?

If you or a family member is experiencing an illness or other health issue and are concerned about exposure to manganese, bring this to the attention of your health care provider. Inform your health care provider that you live near sites that store and handle manganese. If your doctor is unsure of how to address your concerns, have them call the CDPH at **(312) 746-6621**. You may also call this number if you have health-related questions or concerns. Spanish speakers are available.

Where can I find out more?

The City of Chicago has taken a number of steps to protect and improve public health and the environment. To learn more about ongoing actions to protect residents from manganese, please visit www.cityofchicago.org/manganese.