

What I Can Do: **Protecting Against Manganese Dust**

What is 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.

How can I be exposed to excess amounts of manganese?

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

How can I reduce my exposure to manganese-containing dust within my home?

Manganese-containing dust or soil contaminated with this dust, may get into your home. Like any dust, it can settle on the floors, counters and other items, including children's toys. Here are a number of ways everyone can reduce their exposure within their homes:

- Regularly mop floors and wipe down counters using a household cleaner. Do not use bleach.
- Avoid dry sweeping – this will spread dust.
- Regularly clean your children's toys – use warm soapy water then rinse thoroughly.
- Make sure all family members and visitors remove their shoes before entering your home.
- Wash children's hands after they come in from playing outside.
- Consider keeping your windows closed on very dry and windy days when dust is visible.

Can I have a garden if there are high levels of manganese in the soil?

Yes, but it is always best to use a raised bed for your garden. With a raised bed, you purchase and lay the soil yourself, so you know it is clean. Wash all vegetables with cold water and a brush to help remove dirt before cooking or eating, and wash your hands, clothes and shoes after gardening – this helps keep soil and dust from tracking indoors.

What can I do to protect my child from being exposed to high levels of manganese outside of my home?

Prevent young children from playing in bare soil. If possible, plant grass over the soil, or cover it with mulch or wood chips. You can also let children play in sandboxes.

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 you are not sure about the cause of your symptoms, or have concerns 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.

To learn more visit: www.cityofchicago.org/manganese