Formaldehyde: The Pieces Don’t Fit
The weight-of-evidence supports no causal link between formaldehyde and leukemia.

It is critical to consider all the lines of evidence (pieces of the scientific puzzle) to understand the inherent properties of a substance and the potential risks associated with exposure.

Chemical assessments should be based on realistic assumptions and the latest scientific information when establishing a “safe” exposure level for formaldehyde. There is a rich body of epidemiological, toxicological and mechanistic data that supports a safe threshold for formaldehyde exposure. Over the past several years, peer-reviewed studies have addressed the recommended changes made by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to the scientific methods and evaluation approach of the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) draft assessment of formaldehyde. These studies show no association between formaldehyde exposure and an increased risk of leukemia.

Human Evidence is Weak and Inconsistent
The few studies that show weak evidence of association have been refuted by more recent science; extensive reviews of epidemiological literature do not support a causal relationship between formaldehyde exposure and leukemia.

Does Not Reach Distant Sites
Numerous state-of-the-art studies by university researchers show that inhaled formaldehyde does not reach bone marrow.

A Dose-Response has not been Demonstrated
To conclude causality, higher concentrations should result in higher risk, but that has not been seen.

No Supporting Animal Research
Government-funded research in two strains of mice genetically predisposed to develop leukemia showed no leukemia effects from extremely high formaldehyde exposure.

When questionable science is relied upon, it undermines public confidence in government decision-making. High-quality science should be the foundation for government regulations. Poor-quality science can lead to unwarranted restrictions or product de-selection, unfounded public alarm, and unnecessary costs for consumers and businesses.

Taken as a whole, the pieces (lines of evidence) don’t fit together in the scientific puzzle. The weight-of-evidence shows no causal association between formaldehyde exposure and leukemia. EPA and other agencies evaluating chemical risk must consider the entire weight-of-evidence on formaldehyde when setting new, or revising existing, exposure limits.

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