

Working with chemicals always involves the risk of exposure. The health risk is dependent upon the toxicity of the chemical, the types of effects and the various **routes of entry**.

Routes of Entry

Inhalation is the primary route of entry for hazardous chemicals in the work environment. Nearly all materials that are airborne can be inhaled.

Absorption through the skin is another route of entry. The skin is the largest organ of your body and a common exposure site for liquid and airborne chemicals. Absorption through the skin can occur quite rapidly if the skin is cut or abraded. Intact skin is an effective barrier to many hazardous materials.

Ingestion - toxic materials can be swallowed and enter the body through the gastrointestinal tract. In the workplace, people can unknowingly ingest harmful chemicals when you eat, drink, or smoke in a contaminated work areas.

Injection occurs when a sharp object punctures the skin, allowing a chemical or infectious agent to enter your body. For example, injection can occur when a contaminated object such as a rusty nail punctures the skin.

