

Glossary

Absorption

The process of taking in. For a person or an animal, absorption is the process of a substance getting into the body through the eyes, skin, stomach, intestines, or lungs.

Acute exposure

Contact with a substance that occurs once or for only a short time (up to 14 days) [compare with intermediate duration]

Biodegradation

Decomposition or breakdown of a substance through the action of microorganisms (such as bacteria or fungi) or other natural physical processes (such as sunlight).

Biomedical testing

Testing of persons to find out whether a change in a body function might have occurred because of exposure to a hazardous substance.

Cluster investigation

A review of an unusual number, real or perceived, of health events (for example, reports of cancer) grouped together in time and location. Cluster investigations are designed to confirm case reports; determine whether they represent an unusual disease occurrence; and, if possible, explore possible causes and contributing environmental factors.