



IN THE KNOW

Developing Top-Notch CNA's, One Inservice at a Time

A Workplace Safety Module: Chemical Hazards in the Workplace

24 HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS FOUND WHERE?

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There is a widespread myth among healthcare workers that exposure to hazardous chemicals is just **"no big deal."** But, exposure to hazardous chemicals is a very big deal. Healthcare workers are routinely exposed to hazardous chemicals in:

- Cleaning products.
- Medications.
- Sterilization agents.
- Pesticides.
- Floor wax strippers.

A recent study looked at healthcare related hazardous chemicals found in the bodies of doctors and nurses.

⇒ Each participant in the study had at least **24 healthcare related hazardous chemicals in their bodies**, all of which are associated with *chronic illness and physical disorders*.

The recent popularity of making cleaning products more "green" has helped to shine a spotlight on how dangerous some **chemical**

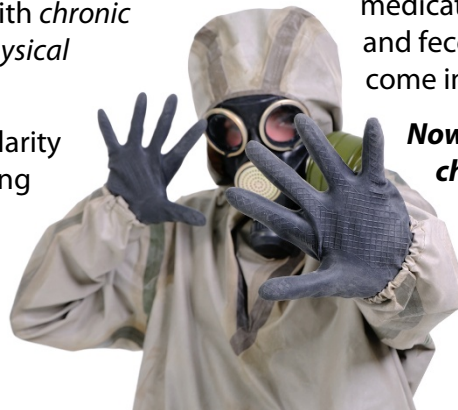
cleaners can be. For instance, one study found that *asthma* caused by *workplace exposure* is now the most **commonly reported** occupational lung condition.

⇒ As many as 37 percent of all asthma sufferers who work in healthcare may have developed symptoms from work related exposure to harmful chemicals in cleaning products.

Exposure to **medications** like anti-cancer drugs, hormones and anti-virals, can lead to reproductive problems, a weakened immune system or can even alter the DNA in healthy cells of healthcare workers who are exposed.

And, you don't have to actually *touch* medications to be exposed. Many medications are excreted in urine and feces. That's something you come in contact with all day long!

Now do you see why hazardous chemicals are "a very big deal" at your workplace? Keep reading to learn why and how you need to protect yourself and your clients from exposure to hazardous chemicals.



WHAT I KNOW!

Take a minute to jot down a few things you already know about chemical hazards before reading this inservice.
