



## Chemical poisoning

Every day millions of workers are exposed to chemicals in the workplace and can go on to suffer from the effects of exposure to poisonous substances if not properly protected.

In some cases this exposure can prove to be dangerous and cause significant health problems over the long-term.

### What causes chemical poisoning?

Chemical poisoning can occur when any substance interferes with normal body functions after it is swallowed, inhaled, injected, or absorbed.

There are many forms of chemical poisoning, including as a result of exposure to organophosphate compounds or hydrocarbons.



Organophosphate compounds are the most commonly used group of insecticides and pesticides and can be highly toxic to the human nervous system, even at low levels of exposure.

Hydrocarbons are compounds found in oils, paraffin, wax and fertilisers. A person can be exposed to hydrocarbons at work if they are not provided with the appropriate protective clothing.





## Who is at risk from chemical poisoning?

If you work in an environment where you encounter chemicals then you may be at increased risk of suffering from chemical poisoning.

Hydrocarbon poisoning is a common type of chemical poisoning that can occur if a hydrocarbon is swallowed or inhaled. The causes of hydrocarbon poisoning are more widespread and exposure can happen at work or at home. Incidents of exposure to hydrocarbons can range from a child accidentally drinking cleaning fluid, to workers developing dermatitis due to regular contact with unclean equipment.

Organophosphate poisoning, another type of chemical poisoning, is associated with the agricultural industry, especially in relation to tasks such as crop spraying.

## What are the effects of chemical poisoning?

Symptoms of chemical poisoning can vary considerably, from skin irritation to a stroke, and in the worst cases can prove fatal.

Organophosphates prevent a person's nervous system from working properly and can adversely affect the brain's nervous system. Symptoms can include anxiety, convulsions, breathing problems, tremors and, in the worst cases, induce comas.



Hydrocarbon poisoning can be more severe depending on the amount of exposure to the chemical. Symptoms can include severe coughing, nausea, poor coordination and drowsiness. It can also cause an irreversible pneumonia-like condition with associated breathing problems and potentially fatal consequences.

## Can I make a compensation claim for chemical poisoning?

If you have suffered from chemical poisoning due to another person's negligence then it may be possible to make an industrial disease compensation claim. Employers have a duty of care to keep their workforces safe and to protect employees from the likely harm of hazardous substances.

Thompsons Solicitors has a specialist team of experts who are dedicated to pursuing industrial disease compensation claims, including chemical poisoning cases. We work closely with support groups and medical experts to ensure we secure the maximum amount of compensation, and will support you and your family through the compensation claims process.



## Contact us

If you or someone you know has suffered from chemical poisoning, call us for compensation claim advice on **0800 0 224 224** or visit our dedicated chemical poisoning page: [www.thompsons.law/services/industrial-diseases](http://www.thompsons.law/services/industrial-diseases)