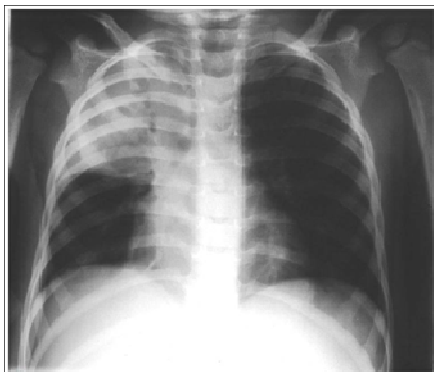


What health problems do meth labs cause ?

June 9, 2009 by [Meth Lab Homes](#)



The risk of injury from chemical exposure depends on the chemical itself, the concentration, the quantity, and the length and route of exposure. Chemicals may enter the body by being breathed, eaten, injected (by a contaminated needle or accidental skin prick), or absorbed by the skin, according to the Washington State Environmental Health and Safety

Agency. Anyone spending time in an active or former meth lab faces health risk and sometimes death.

Children, because of their small stature and still developing brains and vital organs, are especially

vulnerable to the health problems caused by homes filled with toxic chemicals.

Acute Exposure: An acute chemical exposure is one that occurs over a relatively short period of time and may result in health effects. An acute exposure to high levels of contaminants found in methamphetamine labs can cause shortness of breath, cough, chest pain, dizziness, lack of coordination, chemical irritation and burns to the skin, eyes, mouth and nose, and in severe cases, death. Acute reactions of this nature could occur during or immediately after a drug bust, before the lab has been ventilated.

Less severe symptoms resulting from a less acute exposure can cause headache, nausea, dizziness, and fatigue or lethargy. These symptoms have been known to occur in people who have entered a drug lab after the bust has been completed, but before the property has been adequately cleaned and ventilated. These milder health effects can be felt by anyone spending a short time in a non-active meth lab.

Corrosive Effects:

Inhalation or skin exposure may result in injury from corrosive substances present in a methamphetamine lab. Symptoms range from shortness of breath, cough, chest pain, to burns to the skin.

Solvents:

Exposure to solvents can irritate the skin, mucous membranes, respiratory tract, and cause central nervous system effects. They are also dangerous because of their fire and explosive properties.

Chronic Exposure:

Chronic exposure occurs over an extended period of time, such as weeks, months, or years. A chronic health effect is one that usually appears after a lengthy period of time, possibly years. Not much is known about the chronic health effects from these labs. However, there is scientific evidence from animal and human toxicity studies that shows the chemicals used in the manufacture of this drug can cause a range of health effects. These include cancer, damage to the brain, liver and kidneys, birth defects, and reproductive problems, such as miscarriages.

Chronic exposure is a problem for individuals and families living in former meth labs that have not been decontaminated. Police and narcotics agents have been involved with meth lab busts for many years have also experienced serious health problems, including death from being exposed to meth lab chemicals.

If you suspect a dwelling or property may be an illegal lab, contact your local police, or sheriff's department. If you own property which has been used as an illegal lab and would like a list of chemicals confiscated during the bust, contact the law enforcement agency responsible for the bust, such as local police or sheriff, State Patrol, or Federal Drug Enforcement Administration.