

Massive benzene slick in Chinese river

An 80km-long slick of toxic chemicals in the Songhua River in northern China has reached the city of Harbin and threatens other cities further downstream. With toxins including the carcinogen, benzene, at 100 times their normal levels, residents have been warned to stay away from the river to avoid exposure to airborne contaminants

CITIES AT RISK (population)

TOXIC EFFECTS



Ingesting high levels of benzene: Dizziness, headaches, convulsions, vomiting

Rapid heart rate

Chronic exposure damages bone marrow, reducing white blood cell count – crucial in fighting disease.

Can cause **leukaemia**

BENZENE: Clear, colourless, volatile liquid derived from petroleum. Used as additive to gasoline and in production of paints, dyes, adhesives, plastics

