TOP CONCERNS
FROM CRACKER PLANTS

AIR QUALITY
Cracker plants emit poisonous toxins into the air that we breathe in and absorb into our skin.

WATER QUALITY
Wastewater and chemical spills can release toxic pollutants into our drinking water.

NOISE & LIGHT
Unnatural noise, light, and vibration from cracker plants can be disturbing and harmful.

STRESS
Health effects and disturbances from cracker plants can cause uncertainty and stress.

SOIL
Hazardous pollutants associated with cracker plants can settle to the ground and contaminate soil.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
Spills, explosions, and other crises around cracker plants can threaten surrounding communities.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?
✓ Have an EHP public health nurse visit you or come in for a health assessment
✓ Request free air or water monitoring from EHP
✓ Join the Health Effects Registry
✓ Place a HEPA-certified air filter in your home
✓ Remove avoidable indoor air pollutants
✓ Pay attention to the weather and avoid outdoor activity when air quality is poor
✓ Contact your health care provider about symptoms
✓ Contact your local government representative to demand safeguards that protect public health

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT THAT PLASTICS PLANT?

Why Living Near an Ethane Cracker Complex Puts Your Health at Risk

For more information, visit environmentalhealthproject.org

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROJECT
2001 Waterdam Plaza Drive, Suite 201
McMurray, PA 15317
724.260.5504
WHAT IS AN ETHANE CRACKER PLANT?
A cracker plant is a large industrial complex that heats ethane (a component of shale gas) and "cracks" it into ethylene.

WHAT IS ETHYLENE USED FOR?
Ethylene is a colorless, flammable gas. It's used to create polyethylene, the most common plastic. It's also used to make glycols, which are found in antifreeze, cleaning products, clothing, plastic bottles, Styrofoam cups, and tires.

HAZARDOUS POLLUTANTS RELEASED FROM CRACKER PLANTS
- Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) like benzene, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and formaldehyde
- Methane and CO₂ that cause climate change
- Small particulate matter from the plant and truck traffic exhaust
- Hazardous air pollutants that create smog

WHY ARE CRACKER PLANTS DANGEROUS?
Cracker plants are especially dangerous because of their large size. For example, once online, the Beaver County (PA) cracker plant is permitted to release more than 30 tons of hazardous air pollutants, 323 tons of fine particles, 522 tons of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and the equivalent of more than 2 million tons of CO₂ each year.**

Pollution from a cracker plant can cause serious health problems to people living within 5 miles or more. Exposure to these hazardous pollutants has been associated with increased rates of asthma, lung and respiratory infections, and neurological and cardiovascular problems. In large enough doses over time, they can cause cancer.

A cracker plant requires the building of more shale gas wells and pipelines throughout the region to supply it, increasing the chances that residents will be exposed to emissions from multiple sources.

*Fabisiak, Inside Climate News, 2019
**PA DEP Operating Permit

SOME CRACKER PLANTS ARE ALLOWED TO EMIT SMOG-FORMING POLLUTION THAT’S THE EQUIVALENT OF PUTTING 36,000 NEW CARS ON THE ROAD.*