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Gas stoves increase cancer risk, especially for kids, new study finds

The appliances emit benzene, a potent carcinogen. Exposure varies depending on ventilation and other factors, but there's no safe level.

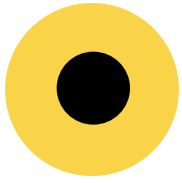


By **Alison F. Takemura**
16 May 2025



(Gerard Bottino/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images)

Gas stoves increase the chances of getting cancer, with nearly double the risk for kids than for adults.



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that something needs to be done,” said Juana María Delgado-Saborit, head of the environmental health research laboratory at the Jaume I University in Spain, who was not involved in the study. “We know that benzene exposure is associated with cancer. ... [The authors] have put a number on ‘How big is the problem?’”

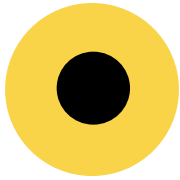
The work is just the latest in a growing body of peer-reviewed research demonstrating that gas-burning stoves and other appliances harm not only future generations with their planet-warming emissions but also have direct health consequences for people who use them now. These appliances spew a wide range of pollutants, including deadly carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides linked to respiratory diseases.

Around the U.S., cities and states are taking steps to limit new gas appliances. New York state is pursuing standards to ensure most new buildings will be all-electric. And in California, updates to infrastructure rules and a supportive statewide energy code are already tipping the economics toward all-electric construction.

But efforts to encourage clean cooking also face strong political headwinds. California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, vetoed a bill last year to label gas stoves with a health warning. On the first day of his second term, President Donald Trump signed an executive order “to safeguard the American people’s freedom to choose” gas stoves. And at the U.S. Capitol this week, the Republican-controlled House proposed axing federal tax credits that currently make it easier for Americans to choose more energy-efficient, all-electric appliances.

In the new study, the team used benzene measurements from gas stoves in 87 homes, analyzing the health risks for the highest-emitting 5% of stoves by modeling how the carcinogen lingers in different rooms across several types of U.S. housing.




There’s no safe level of benzene exposure. But a common statistical limit for an acceptable level of exposure to the chemical is one person in a million getting cancer over a 70-year lifetime.



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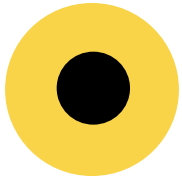
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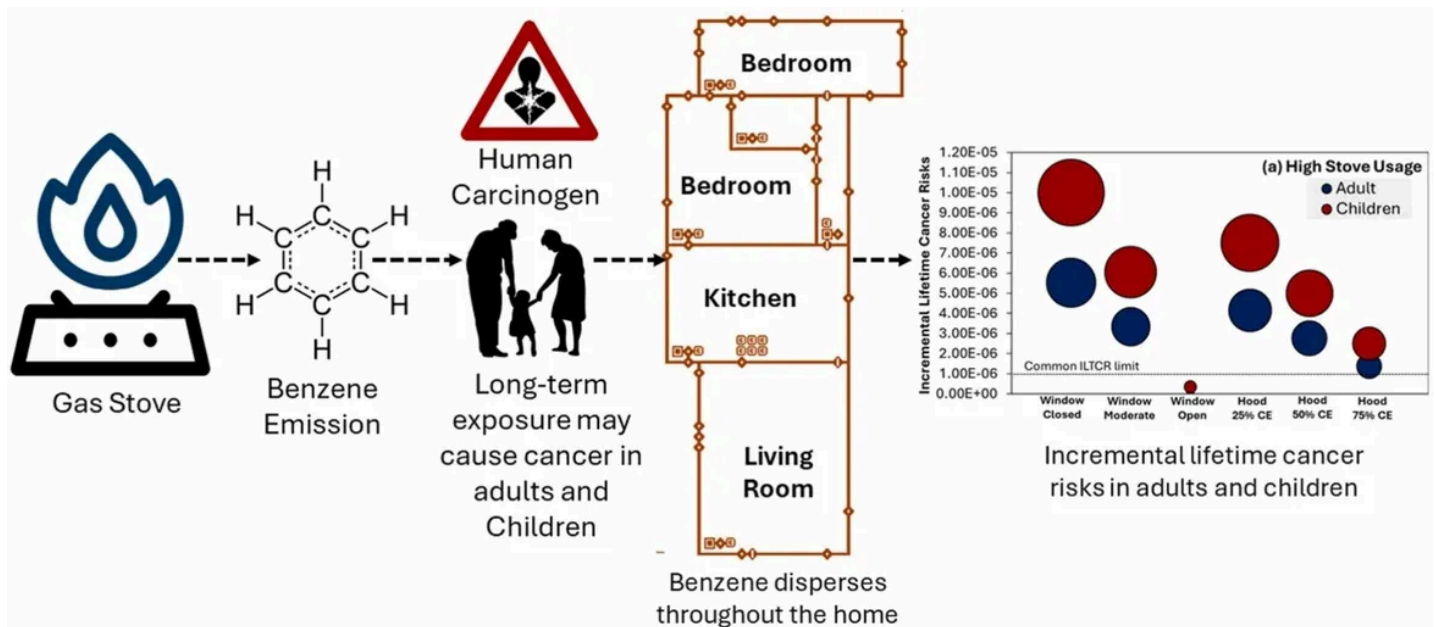
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Accounting for exposure across the whole home, gas stove benzene increased cancer risk for kids by up to 1.85 times the risk for adults.

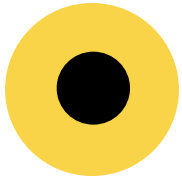


New research finds that gas stoves raise cancer risks in adults and kids by emitting benzene, a known carcinogen. (*Journal of Hazardous Materials*)

Ventilating with a high-efficiency range hood or by opening the windows could help decrease the risk, the team found, but couldn't eradicate it completely.

"The only way to eliminate the exposure is to replace a gas or propane stove with a non-emitting induction or other electric stove," Rob Jackson, senior author of the study and Earth systems professor at Stanford, told Canary Media.

About 38% of U.S. households cook with blue flames. Across those roughly 47 million homes, the team estimates that 6.3 million Americans are breathing in benzene from their gas stoves at the levels modelled.



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“Who wants to breathe more carcinogenic benzene than we have to?”

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Alison F. Takemura is staff writer at Canary Media. She reports on home electrification, building decarbonization strategies, and the clean energy workforce.

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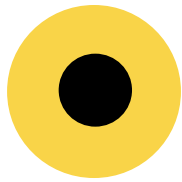
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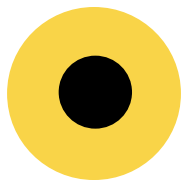
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