Effects of exposure to waste anesthetic gases include dizziness, feeling of being light-headed, nausea, fatigue, headache, irritability, and depression. Employee exposure to waste anesthetic gases may experience difficulty with cognitive, perception, and motor skills. Exposure measurements taken in OR’s during the clinical administration of inhaled anesthetics indicate that waste gases can escape into the room from various components of the anesthesia delivery system. Potential leak sources include tank valves, high and low pressure machine connections, connections in the breathing circuit, defects in rubber and plastic tubing, hoses, reservoir bags, and ventilator bellows and Y-connector. In addition, certain anesthetic techniques, such as leaving the gas flow valves open and vaporizers on after use, spillage of liquid inhaled anesthetics, and poorly fitting face masks or improperly inflated tracheal tube and laryngeal mask airway cuffs also can contribute to the escape of waste anesthetic gas into the atmosphere.

In general, the detection of halogenated anesthetic agents by their odor would indicate the existence of very high levels, as these agents do not have a strong odor at low concentrations. Since there is limited data, occupational exposure limits for these agents have not been determined. Therefore, until more information is available, it is prudent to attempt to minimize occupational exposure. Passive dosimeters are the most convenient way to monitor your environment!

### Your Right to Know

#### Exposure Risks

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