

Polycyclic Organic Compounds

Encyclopedia Article

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Polycyclic Organic Compounds

In organic chemistry, a cyclic compound is one whose molecules consist of three or more atoms joined in a closed ring. A polycyclic compound is one whose molecules contain two or more rings joined to each other. Environmentally, the most important polycyclic organic compounds are the **polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons**, also known as polynuclear aromatic **hydrocarbons** (PAHs). Some examples of polycyclic organic compounds include naphthalene, anthracene, pyrene, and the benzopyrenes. A number of polycyclic hydrocarbons pose hazards to human health. For example, benzo(a)pyrene from **automobile** exhaust and **tobacco smoke** is known to be a **carcinogen**.

See Also

Cigarette Smoke