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'CBS Reports' Examines Hazard Of Vinyl Plastic

Vinyl chloride is a gas which is processed into polyvinyl chloride commonly known as vinyl plastic. It is the material used for thousands of commonplace products such as phonograph albums, upholstery covers, salad-oil bottles, supermarket meat and produce wrappers, beverage can liners and blood bags.

It is a substance which has also been linked to a least 14 cases of a rare type of liver cancer among the 6,500 workers in polyvinyl processing plants in the United States. Saturday night at 10 p.m. on

Channel 3, CBS will examine in "The Case of the Plastic Peril" the health hazards of this versatile and widespread product.

The show telescopes the action taken by government agencies — in this case, those concerned with worker safety and consumer protection — and industry to deal with an industrial health problems.

Morton Dean, the show's correspondent, talks with plastics factory workers about their fears. He talks with those whose blood tests have revealed liver disorders. And he

also interviews Ray Gettlefinger, 42, father of six, who has incurable cancer of the liver.

Large-scale production of vinyl chloride began in the 1950s and was then presumed harmless. It has taken about 20 years for the disease to manifest itself in the plastic processors. There also has been liver cancer among assembly line workers who assemble the finished plastics products. No one knows how many people have been affected or if, in fact, the cancer will begin to show up as a common killer.

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