Benzo(A)pyrene Encyclopedia Article

Benzo(A)pyrene

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Benzo(A)pyrene

Benzo(a)pyrene [B(a)P] is a polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) having five aromatic rings in a fused, honeycomb-like structure. Its formula and molecular weight are $C_{20}H_{12}$ and 252.30, respectively. It is a naturally occurring and man-made organic compound formed along with other PAH in incomplete **combustion** reactions, including the burning of **fossil fuels**, motor vehicle exhaust, wood products, and cigarettes. It is classified as a known human **carcinogen** by the EPA, and is considered to be one of the primary carcinogens in **tobacco smoke**. Synthesized in 1933, it was the first carcinogen isolated from **coal** tar and often serves as a surrogate compound for **modeling** PAHs.