

*** Name Origin:**

German: wissmuth (white mass).

*** Sources:**

It can be found free in nature and in minerals like bismuthine (Bi_2O_3) and in bismuth ochre (Bi_2O_3).

*** Uses:**

Main use is in pharmaceuticals, low melting point alloys, fuses, sprinklers, glass, ceramics and as a catalyst in rubber production.

*** Additional Notes:**

In early times bismuth was confused with tin and lead. Claude Geoffroy the Younger showed it to be distinct from lead in 1753. It is a white crystalline, brittle metal with a pinkish tinge. It occurs native. The most important ores are bismuthinite or bismuth glance (Bi_2S_3) and bismite (Bi_2O_3). Peru, Japan, Mexico, Bolivia, and Canada are major bismuth producers. Much of the bismuth produced in the U.S. is obtained as a by-product in refining lead, copper, tin, silver, and gold ores. Bismuth is the most diamagnetic of all metals, and the thermal conductivity is lower than any metal, except mercury. It has a high electrical resistance, and has the highest Hall effect of any metal (i.e., greatest increase in electrical resistance when placed in a magnetic field). "Bismanol" is a permanent magnet of high coercive force, made of MnBi, by the U.S. Naval Surface Weapons Center. Bismuth expands 3.32% on solidification. This property makes bismuth alloys particularly suited to the making of sharp castings of objects subject to damage by high temperatures. With other metals such as tin, cadmium, etc., bismuth forms low-melting alloys which are extensively used for safety devices in fire detection and extinguishing systems. Bismuth is used in producing malleable irons and is finding use as a catalyst for making acrylic fibers. When bismuth is heated in air it burns with a blue flame, forming yellow fumes of the oxide. The metal is also used as a thermocouple material, and has found application as a carrier for U235 or U233 fuel in atomic reactors. Its soluble salts are characterized by forming insoluble basic salts on the addition of water, a property sometimes used in detection work. Bismuth oxychloride is used extensively in cosmetics. Bismuth subnitrate and subcarbonate are used in medicine. Natural bismuth contains only one isotope ^{209}Bi . Forty one isotopes and isomers of bismuth are known.