Formaldehyde

**Formaldehyde** is an [organic compound](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organic_compound) with the [formula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chemical_formula) CH2O or HCHO. It is the simplest [aldehyde](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aldehyde" \o "Aldehyde), hence its [systematic name](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Systematic_name) **methanal**. The common name of the substance comes from its similarity and relation to [formic acid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Formic_acid).

A gas at [room temperature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Room_temperature), formaldehyde is colorless and has a characteristic pungent, irritating odor. It is an important precursor to many other materials and chemical compounds. In 2005, annual world production of formaldehyde was estimated to be 8.7 million tonnes.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Formaldehyde#cite_note-Ullmann-3) Commercial solutions of formaldehyde in water, commonly called **formol**, were formerly used as [disinfectants](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disinfectant) and for preservation of biological specimens.

 