The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifies substances to show whether they are suspected to cause cancer or not. It places substances into one of five categories depending on the strength of evidence for their carcinogenicity.

**GROUP 1**
- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?** CARCINOGENIC TO HUMANS
  - Sufficient evidence in humans. Causal relationship established.
- **WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?**
  - Smoking, exposure to solar radiation, alcoholic beverages and processed meats.

**GROUP 2A**
- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?** PROBABLY CARCINOGENIC TO HUMANS
  - Limited evidence in humans. Sufficient evidence in animals.
- **WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?**
  - Emissions from high temp. frying, steroids, exposures working in hairdressing, red meat.

**GROUP 2B**
- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?** POSSIBLY CARCINOGENIC TO HUMANS
  - Limited evidence in humans. Insufficient evidence in animals.
- **WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?**
  - Coffee, gasoline & gasoline engine exhaust, welding fumes, pickled vegetables.

**GROUP 3**
- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?** CARCINOGENICITY NOT CLASSIFIABLE
  - Inadequate evidence in humans. Inadequate evidence in animals.
- **WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?**
  - Tea, static magnetic fields, fluorescent lighting, polyethene.

**GROUP 4**
- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?** PROBABLY NOT CARCINOGENIC
  - Evidence suggests no carcinogenicity in humans/animals
- **WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?**
  - Caprolactam, which is used in the manufacture of synthetic fibres.

**1** ONLY 1 CHEMICAL EVER PLACED IN THIS GROUP, OF ALL SUBSTANCES ASSESSED

**THE IARC’S INDEX ONLY TELLS US HOW STRONG THE EVIDENCE IS THAT SOMETHING CAUSES CANCER. SUBSTANCES IN THE SAME CATEGORY CAN DIFFER VASTLY IN HOW MUCH THEY INCREASE CANCER RISK.**