



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

ABRIN

What is abrin?

Abrin is a natural poison that is found in the seeds of a plant called the rosary pea or jequirity pea. Abrin is similar to ricin; however, abrin is more poisonous. Abrin can be made in the form of a powder, a mist, a pellet, or it can be dissolved in water. Powdered abrin is yellowish-white in color.

What are possible methods of exposure?

It would take a deliberate act to obtain abrin from rosary pea seeds and use it to poison people. Accidental exposure to abrin is not likely.

- breathing abrin in the form of a mist or a powder
- touching contaminated surfaces on which abrin particles or droplets have landed
- eating or drinking abrin

Abrin poisoning is not contagious and it cannot be spread by person to person contact.

What are possible symptoms of abrin exposure?

Inhalation:

- difficulty breathing
- fever
- cough
- nausea
- tightness in chest

Ingestion:

- vomiting
- diarrhea
- severe dehydration
- low blood pressure
- possible death

How is abrin detected?

Abrin powder is yellowish-white in color.

What is the treatment for exposure to abrin?

If you have been exposed to abrin, contact the emergency medical authorities immediately.

Abrin poisoning is treated by giving victims supportive medical care to minimize the effects of the poisoning. The types of supportive medical care would depend on the route by which victims are poisoned.

For more information on abrin contact:

Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/abrin/

Phone: (888) 246-2675