



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

ETHYLENE GLYCOL

What is ethylene glycol?

Ethylene glycol is a clear, odorless, slightly thick liquid with a sweet taste. It is flammable and has a low vapor pressure. Ethylene glycol is a very useful industrial compound because of its low freezing point and high boiling point. It is widely available as automotive antifreeze.

What are possible methods of exposure?

- ingesting, breathing, touching ethylene glycol
 - antifreeze
 - photographic developing solutions
 - coolants
 - brake fluid.

What are possible symptoms of ethylene glycol exposure?

Ingestion:

- central nervous system effects
- cardiopulmonary effects
- kidney failure

How is ethylene glycol detected?

Ethylene glycol has a sweet taste and is often mixed with a yellow-green fluorescent.

What is the treatment for exposure to ethylene glycol?

Persons who have ingested ethylene glycol should contact the emergency medical authorities immediately.

In severe exposures, special antidotes and hemodialysis might be needed. Treatment is generally successful if begun within 3 hours of swallowing, and most people recover completely after treatment.

For more information on ethylene glycol contact:

Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/ethylenglycol/
Phone: (888) 246-2675