



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

SARIN

What is sarin?

Sarin is a man-made chemical that is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. It is similar to a material used in certain pesticides, but is more poisonous and faster acting. It can exist in the liquid form or can evaporate into a gas form which can be spread into the environment. The vapor (gas) form tends to settle in low-lying areas. Sarin is also known as GB.

What are possible methods of exposure?

- release of sarin into the air
 - by breathing the gas
 - by skin or eye contact
 - by absorbing into clothing (clothing can release the vapor gas for about 30 minutes after exposure)
- release of sarin liquid into water or food
 - eating foods that have been contaminated by the chemical
 - drinking water or other liquids that have been contaminated by the chemical

Since sarin is colorless and tasteless it can be used as a weapon of bioterrorism by using it to contaminate air, food or water.

What are possible symptoms of sarin exposure?

Symptoms of sarin often depend on the amount, duration, and route of exposure. Symptoms can occur from seconds to as much as 18 hours after exposure. The symptoms for sarin can include:

Skin contact (small droplets):

- sweating
- muscle twitching

Inhalation:

- low to moderate dose
 - runny nose
 - watery eye
 - eye pain/blurred vision
 - drooling/excessive sweating
 - cough
 - chest tightness
 - rapid breathing
 - diarrhea
 - increased urination
 - confusion
 - drowsiness
 - weakness
 - headache
 - nausea/vomiting
 - stomach pain
 - low or high blood pressure
- high dose
 - loss of consciousness
 - convulsions
 - paralysis
 - respiratory failure which may lead to death

How is sarin detected?

Sarin is difficult to diagnose. The diagnosis is usually based on the clinical symptoms, especially if there is a mass casualty situation where all the victims display symptoms of sarin exposure.

What is the treatment for exposure to sarin?

- leave area of exposure immediately and seek fresh air
- contact emergency medical authorities
- wash off any liquid or fumes of sarin with large amounts of water and soap
- remove and contain any clothing in multiple sealed plastic bags
- once decontaminated seek immediate medical treatment
- if swallowed do not induce vomiting wait for emergency personnel

For more information on sarin contact:

Ottawa County Health Department

www.miOttawa.org/

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/sarin/

Phone: (888) 246-2675