



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

STRYCHNINE

What is strychnine?

Strychnine is a white odorless, bitter crystalline powder that can be taken by mouth, inhaled (breathed in), or mixed in a solution and injected directly into a vein. Strychnine is a strong poison; only a small amount is needed to produce severe effects in people.

What are possible methods of exposure?

- drinking contaminated water
- eating contaminated food
- smoking or snorting strychnine as a component of street drugs
- needle drug (street drugs) injection use into the vein

What are possible symptoms of strychnine exposure?

Any method of exposure:

- agitation
- apprehension or fear
- ability to be easily startled
- jaw tightness
- uncontrollable arching of the neck and back
- rigid arms and legs
- muscle pain and soreness
- difficulty breathing
- dark urine

How is strychnine detected?

Strychnine is a white, odorless, bitter crystalline powder.

What is the treatment for exposure to strychnine?

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

Treatment consists of removing the drug from the body and getting supportive medical care in a hospital setting. Supportive care includes fluids, medications for convulsions and spasms, and cooling measures for high temperatures.

For more information on strychnine contact:

Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/strychnine/
Phone: (888) 246-2675