



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

TABUN

What is tabun?

Tabun is a man-made chemical that is colorless and tasteless, with a faint fruity odor. It is similar to a material used in certain pesticides but is more poisonous and faster acting. The liquid form of tabun can be turned into a gas when exposed to high temperatures. The vapor form tends to settle in low lying areas.

What are possible methods of exposure?

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

Since tabun is colorless and tasteless it could be used as a weapon of bioterrorism by making it airborne or by using it to contaminate food or water.

What are possible symptoms of tabun exposure?

Symptoms of tabun 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 tabun 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 tabun detected?

Tabun 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 tabun exposure.

What is the treatment for exposure to tabun?

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

For more information on tabun contact:

Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org

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