



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

STAPHYLOCOCCAL ENTEROTOXIN B (SEB)

What is SEB?

SEB is one of several toxins/poisons caused by bacteria. SEB does not usually cause death but rather it can make up to 80% of people who are exposed sick for 1 to 2 weeks.

How is SEB spread?

SEB may be spread through the following ways:

- Inhalation of bacteria from breathing in the bacteria
- Ingestion of the bacteria
 - Improper handling of the food
 - Consumption of the contaminated food or water supply

SEB could possibly be used as a weapon of bioterrorism by making the bacteria airborne.

SEB can not be spread from person to person.

What are possible symptoms of SEB exposure?

Symptoms of SEB often depend on the route of exposure:

- Inhalation – appears between 3 – 12 hours after exposure
 - high fever
 - chills
 - headache
 - muscle aches
 - dry cough
 - possible inflammation of eyelids

Severe Cases:

- difficulty breathing
- chest pain
- fluid on the lungs

The fever could last between 2 to 5 days and the cough up to 4 weeks.

- Ingestion – usually recognized as “food poisoning” and symptoms last for about 24 hours
 - nausea
 - vomiting
 - diarrhea

What is the treatment for exposure to SEB?

There is no vaccine or specific antibiotic treatment for SEB. Often times pain relievers and cough medicine are given to help with the symptoms. In severe cases a person may be hospitalized for fluid replacement or help breathing.

How can SEB be prevented?

A person can prevent the poisoning by wearing protective masks when SEB is in the air. SEB is also prevented by cleaning surfaces that have been in contact with the toxin with soap and water and by destroying the food that is contaminated with SEB.

For more information on SEB contact:

Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org

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